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# THE INDEPENDENT

3,046

WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 1996

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## Major plays the loyalty cards

Euro-sceptics out in the cold as PM promotes trusted lieutenants

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

Shuffling the final cards in his pack before the general election, John Major yesterday rewarded loyalty by promoting some of his most trusted middle-ranking ministers and leaving the Euro-sceptics out in the cold.

The Prime Minister had been under pressure from the Thatcherite right wing to promote some of the leading Tory opponents of a single currency and thereby signal the shift in Government's policy in the run-up to polling day.

But after consulting the pro-European Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, Mr Major responded to the resignation of David Heathcoat-Amory from the Treasury by slamming the door firmly on the Euro-sceptics, some of whom are accused of plotting against him.

Mr Heathcoat-Amory, the former Paymaster General, who resigned over the issue of the single currency, yesterday began his campaign against it.

Mr Major, however, had designed this last reshuffle to show that he was not bowing to pressure to change policy on Europe, and that it would be "business as usual" until the election which - he told the Commons at Prime Minister's Questions - he wants to postpone until the spring of 1997.

The plum prize in the reshuffle - Mr Heathcoat-Amory's ti-

tle as Paymaster General with an £8,000 pay rise to the ministerial salary of £74,125 - was given to David Willetts, a trusted junior minister and one of the party's more intellectual politicians, as reward for loyalty and consolation for not being given higher office.

In a move to give Kenneth Clarke a free hand at the Treasury, Mr Major promoted Philip Oppenheim to become Treasury Secretary. Although he is a hard-bitten right-winger, he was Mr Clarke's Parliamentary private secretary (PPS) for six years.

Mr Major made no Cabinet changes, to avoid turbulence at the top, disappointing a number of those knocking on the door. They included David Davis, a minister who threatened to resign and was kept in his place at the Foreign Office in charge of EU negotiations.

The Prime Minister rewarded several trusted whips with promotion, including Greg Knight, the deputy chief whip, who was moved to the Department of Trade and Industry, to replace Tim Eggar, the energy minister, who stepped down. Liam Fox, the Treasury whip, was promoted to the Foreign Office. Andrew Mackay, an ultra-loyal whip, was promoted to become deputy chief whip, and Mr Major appointed the first woman to the whip's office - Jacqui Lait, MP for Hastings.

Mr Major held more than an hour of private talks at Down-

ing Street with Mr Clarke (who himself contemplated resigning from the Government earlier in the year) before he announced the reshuffle. It is understood that there will be no further shift in policy towards the Euro-sceptics. "Heathcoat-Amory's resignation has made us dig in deeper behind the agreed policy. It can't be changed now," said a senior ministerial source.

Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, went on television to announce that the policy on a single currency, set out in a White Paper with a promise of a referendum, would not change. The aim is to end speculation - some of it caused by jitters at Tory Central Office - that the Tories could be forced into a more Euro-sceptic position by a Labour move to rule out British membership of a single currency in the next parliament.

But the reshuffle gave Mr Major a chance to reassert his authority. He put the left-of-centre John Bowis into the high-profile post of minister of transport for London to replace Steve Norris.

But beyond rebuking dissent and rewarding loyalty, the reshuffle has not produced any wild cards or political aces. John Prescott, the Labour deputy leader, said: "If this is the team that will take the Tories into the next election, no wonder they are looking gloomy."

Profiles, page 2

## Sainsbury's threatened by bomber

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

An extortionist waging a bombing campaign against Barclays Bank has threatened to target Sainsbury's and possibly other supermarket chains, it was revealed yesterday.

Security has been stepped up at Sainsbury's 376 food stores amid fears that a "bullet bomb" could be detonated inside one.

In the past 19 months, the extortionist, who uses the code-name "Mardi Gra", has either sent in the post or planted a total of 25 explosive devices - most of them using bullets - against Barclays. Three people have suffered minor injuries in the attacks.

On 10 July, he sent a letter to Sainsbury's head office in south-east London, threatening to leave bombs inside stores or to send them through the post, unless what was described as a "considerable amount" of money was paid. Police have refused to disclose the total demanded, but the bomber is understood to have demanded more than a £1m from Barclays.

Previously, it had been thought that Mardi Gra was probably a disgruntled Barclays' customer or a former member of staff, but the shift towards one of the country's best-known supermarkets suggests he is an obsessive criminal who is becoming increasingly desperate. Police now fear he could escalate his campaign.

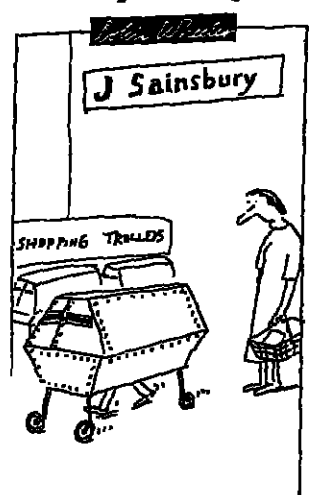
This concern was further heightened by the disclosure from Sainsbury's that the letter sent to their head office suggested that other chains could be targeted in future. A spokesman said: "The letter raises the prospect of including other supermarket companies."

Dino Adriano, Sainsbury's deputy chief executive, added: "There was a demand for money from this extortionist, who also threatened to broaden his

previous activities to include supermarkets."

Det Supt John Beadle, of Scotland Yard's Specialist Operations Department, said he believed the likely target area was London and the south-east - probably the region where the bomber lives or works. He said that the bullet bombs had been put together with "a considerable degree" of care and time.

The devices were fitted into video boxes and books and include shotgun cartridges and



bullets designed to explode when opened. With the exception of the ammunition, most of the components could be bought from DIY shops.

The extortionist's campaign against Barclays began in December 1994, when six devices were sent in the post to branches in London. Two went off, and a woman clerk suffered minor injuries to her hands. Further devices were sent to individual members of Barclays staff, as well as to branches in London. Others were left outside branches. After the campaign became public in April this year, two people were slightly hurt by a device outside Barclays in Ealing, west London.

## The new red telephone box? Or an alien in cold perspex

REBECCA FOWLER

It was like waiting for the return of a reassuring old friend, only to be greeted by a perspex stranger. Nothing could better sum up the corporate dreariness of modern Britain than the unveiling of the new BT red telephone box yesterday.

The new look, the first change in design for 10 years, will make its debut this autumn and is based on market research that suggested people wanted to return to a familiar red.

There was no sign yesterday of the solid red frame, the cosy glass windows, and the comforting roof that formed the basis for Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's design. His first model, the K2, became as English an institution as village cricket, black taxis, and the World Service.

Sir Giles was the winner of a national post office competition in 1924, 18 years after the first coin-operated telephone box was installed in London. His 1935 update, the beloved K6, became a reassuring sight at village greens, train stations, and remote roadsides across Britain, beaming out from afar. But the future is an impersonal transparent box, with a red stripe



Testing: Seats on BT's new phonebox are checked

across the top. Only one thing is in the new box's favour: that it is better suited to the needs of disabled people.

Giles Worsley, editor of *Perspectives on Architecture*, said: "The tragedy is that in the Twenties they thought terribly

hard about it and went to a leading architect. Here it looks as if they've pretty much bought an off-the-peg design and adapted it slightly.

He added: "What the original was, in a very small way, was a piece of architecture, whereas all these boxes that have followed have been just boxes. The danger is that as there are more telephone companies, we're going to have more of these boxes, all different, cluttering up the place."

More than 40,000 red telephone classics were removed in 1990, to almost universal dismay, amid criticisms from BT that they were losing money and were all too often mistaken for lavatories. There are only 15,000 of the old-style boxes left on British streets.

Despite the criticism BT was standing by its new boxes yesterday, which may yet become a classic for future generations. Bob Warner, BT's director of payphones, said: "We can only judge these things after 50 years. When the Scott phone box came out there was a lot of criticism, that it was too garish, the red was too bright and it conflicted with the High Street, but people came to love it."

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**Sheep BSE scare**  
Confused statements in Brussels yesterday failed to ease concern that sheep throughout Europe could be infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, posing a wide risk to human health. Page 4



**Judge condemned**  
A judge was widely condemned as biased and out of touch yesterday after he halted the case against a policeman accused of indecently assaulting colleagues. Page 3

**KGB guide to travel**  
The KGB's Travel Guide to the cities of the world was launched at a signing ceremony in a Russian bookshop this week. Seven former spies give handy tips on what to wear and where to eat to a generation now free to travel. Page 3



New pack (from top): David Willetts, John Bowis, Jacqui Lait, Greg Knight, Liam Fox  
Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

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# MPs' reshuffle fever masks the stench of death

London was hot and wet yesterday: the kind of sultry weather when dead things rot quickly. And, as became all too clear in the House, this administration is beyond saving.

Try what medical intervention they might, every bandage has come unravelling, every suture unstitched, every wound infected. Most of those walking around the precincts of the House are only waiting for the electorate to make the official pronouncement of death.

But not all Tory MPs yet realise that their government has booked its trip on Charnon's ferry. It was the penultimate day of the parliamentary year, and energised by the prospect of a



DAVID AARONOVITCH

reshuffle, some of them were still working overtime to ingratiate themselves with the whips. Like the furthest extremities of a vast dead beast they continue to twitch, unaware that the heart has ceased to beat.

These deluded souls, who lay their tributes pointlessly at the feet of cracked and crumbling

idols, single themselves out by the ritual inclusion of the inane phrase "New Labour, New Danger" in their contributions. Yesterday began with questions to ministers at the Department of Social Security, who spend more taxpayer's cash than any other group of ministers.

Pretty important stuff, you might think. Not for John Marshall (Hendon South): "Is this not another new danger from new Labour?" Not for Bob Dunn (Dartford): "New Labour, new danger": not for Jacqui Lait (Hastings and Rye), not for Nigel Waterson (Eastbourne), not even for girly minister Oliver Heald. All of them grown politicians, but all

reduced to the parroting of a preposterous Central Office slogan every time they opened their mouths.

And for what? Nigel Waterson on the road to the Foreign Secretaryship? Gimme a break. Jacqui Lait to the Whips' Office? Er, yes, actually, that one happened. But if anybody had ever thought that John Marshall was any use at all, they have had 17 years to give him the recognition that he deserves. And for 17 years they have resisted the temptation. Should the whips, who sit on the end of the front bench - taking notes of the "new Labour, new danger" count in the House - have ever suggested to John that he was "under

consideration" then they lied. But soon it won't matter any way. At Prime Minister's Question Time, John Major told the House that the electorate "will choose low taxes in the 1997 election". He is most certainly right: Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party stands no chance - all the others would rather bathe in a tub of razor blades than put up taxes.

That election cannot come too soon for MPs. As they disperse to spend more time with their families, most of them know that the next session of Parliament will be dreadful - a seven-month wake for a much disliked relative, complete with corpse. Already Mr Major - ke-

babbled yesterday by Mr Blair, who took a toothy soundbite out of the PM's tenderest parts - looks and sounds defeated. In front of him, he could see Labour MPs preening themselves in their mental mirrors, elated by what terrific ministers they are going to make. Worse, behind him, his own supporters are running sweeps on the succession: Portillo, Redwood, Howard, Forsyth (if he keeps his seat), Dorrell, perhaps even the Governor of Hong Kong?

If they can't decide, they could always introduce this tiebreak: Which candidate has most uttered the phrase: "New Labour, new danger?" It makes you want to weep.

## Three arrested by taxi murder police

MICHAEL STREETER

Three men were arrested yesterday by detectives investigating the murder of the Catholic taxi driver Michael McGoldrick.

One of those detained in Portadown, County Armagh, was reported to be a prominent loyalist who has close links with the paramilitary organisation the Ulster Volunteer Force.

Mr McGoldrick, a part-time taxi driver and recent graduate of Queen's University, Belfast, was found shot dead near Lurgan as Orangemen were gathering at Drumcree for their annual march.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, yesterday met representatives of the loyalist Apprentice Boys from Londonderry about their march on 10 August near the Nationalist Bogside area of the city.

Many observers, including the police, fear a "Drumcree Mark Two" if no agreement is reached between the two communities about the route of the march, which last year provoked Nationalist violence.

At Stormont, informal talks will continue today in the all-party negotiations in an attempt to reach agreement on procedural differences before Monday, when it is hoped full-scale negotiations can start.

George Mitchell, the chairman, will circulate a paper proposing a possible agreement on procedural disputes.

The Ulster Unionists said they were waiting to study the proposals to see whether they represented a realistic way forward. The SDLP said it would be "unconscionable" for no agreement to be reached at least on procedural matters.



Stepping out: Michael Flatley receiving treatment backstage from massage therapist Derry Ann Morgan before last night's premiere of *Lord of the Dance* at the Coliseum, London. Flatley, who shot to fame with the Riverdance show, has injured a calf muscle Photograph: David Rose

## Labour to list top donors

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

Labour yesterday brought forward the publication of the names of big donors to the party in order to head off charges of secrecy over its own funding, as it pursued its attack on Conservative "ministers for sale".

Labour officials said they would publish an "interim" list of big donors in September - contradicting earlier indications that the party would not disclose the identities of individuals and companies donating more than £5,000 until after the election.

Despite much-repeated claims that the party would be completely open about the sources of its funding, it emerged that Labour would not disclose the amounts contributed to the party. It will simply publish a list of names of those giving more than £5,000 in any one year.

Normally, the accounts, to be approved by this year's party conference would cover January to December 1995. This meant that donors to Labour since January this year, when the party's policy of open disclosure was agreed, would not be disclosed until September

1997 - after the last possible date for a general election.

Labour has publicised a number of donations, including £500,000 from the publisher Paul Hamlyn, who will pay for newspaper adverts exhorting party members and trades unionists to vote in the ballot on the party's pre-manifesto, *New Labour, New Life for Britain*.

At a £450-a-head fundraising dinner at the Savoy hotel in London earlier this month, the animal rights pressure group Political Animal Lobby donated £17,500 to party funds to buy Eric Cantona's FA Cup Final shirt in a celebrity auction.

Labour officials were unable to say yet how the party would declare the income from such events. Several companies which bought tickets said they did not regard the payments as political donations and would not be declaring them in their accounts.

A spokesman for Hanson, the Anglo-American conglomerate which donates money to the Conservative party but which also paid for two tickets to the Savoy dinner, said it was regarded as part of its "parliamentary liaison" work.

"It has always been part of our policy to have a dialogue

with the main political parties," he said.

In the Commons yesterday, the Prime Minister was forced to reject a claim that he was "hired out" by a club created to raise funds for the Conservative party. "No one can buy access to ministers, no one is promised favours," he said.

John Major was challenged by Peter Hain (Lab, Neath) about a report that for £10,000 members of the Premier Club were offered dinner with Cabinet ministers, and that for £100,000 donors could dine twice a year with the Prime Minister.

## Six of the best: profiles of the winners in Major's new team

The six MPs promoted in the reshuffle:

**Greg Knight**, 47, is a likeable Midlands MP with a passionate interest in classic American cars with big engines. He brought his most recent acquisition, a six-litre Camaro saloon into Westminster as Salmon was debating cutting the mileage allowance for "gas guzzlers".

Approachable, and standing well over six feet tall, Mr Knight was seen as an asset in the whips office as the quiet enforcer of discipline. He was deeply disappointed to be overlooked for the post of Chief Whip, when Alastair Goodlad was promoted over his head in 1995.

His consolation will be to take on an industry role, at minister of state rank, which effectively makes him number two to Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade.

Mr Knight trained as a solicitor and has a special interest in consumer law. Since 1983, he has been the MP for Derby North, where he has a majority of 4,453.

**David Willetts**, brainy and bespectacled, is the new Paymaster General, and one of the brightest ministers in the Government. He plays a crucial role as the go-between for Conservative Central Office and Downing Street.

Known as the "deputy to the deputy", Mr Willetts is the number two to Michael Heseltine, the deputy Prime Minister. Mr Willetts, 40, is often to be seen bicycling in a helmet around Whitehall, rather than using an official car.

Although his official title as a minister at the office of public service put him charge of the civil service, his real job has been

coordinating Government strategy and promotion on the Cabinet's committee for policy co-ordination and presentation, to plot the course of Government announcements and attacks on Labour.

The author of *Modern Conservatism*, Mr Willetts became an MP for Havant in 1992. His new title will be seen as a consolation for not gaining higher office in the Cabinet before the election. CB

**Jacqui Lait** is the first woman in the Tory whips' office, and is an ardent pro-European who has been burnt in effigy on the back of a trawler based in her Hastings and Rye constituency. She had failed to take the necessary hard line against the Common Fisheries Policy, which the small local fishing industry regards as a form of licensed Spanish piracy.

On the lowest rung of the Government ladder, as a private parliamentary secretary, she has been a conspicuous loyalist in asking helpful questions in the Commons chamber. Only yesterday she was one of six Tories who managed to work "New Labour, New Danger" into a question to the Prime Minister - just as she did, to similar Labour jeers, last week. JR

**Phillip Oppenheim**, 40, is a bright, hard-hitting right-winger, who will remain loyal to Kenneth Clarke, as a junior minister at the Treasury.

A committed supporter of free-market economics, Mr Oppenheim is the author of a book on the sunrise economics of the Far East - *Can the West Match Japan* - and he was Mr Clarke's Parliamentary Private Secretary for six years before being made an employment min-

ister. He is also interested in computers, motors and aerospace.

The son of millionaire Baroness (Sally) Oppenheim, he is regarded as one of the most eligible bachelors in the Commons. He is writing a political novel mixing sex and intrigue with insights into life at Westminster.

Educated at Harrow and Oriel College, Oxford, he became Tory MP for Amber Valley in 1983 and now has a majority of 712, one the narrowest in the House. CB

**Liam Fox**: The first question that many Tory MPs asked about the extra junior minister at the Foreign Office was, is he a Euro-sceptic? For the past two years he has been virtually silenced as a whip, but friends say, like most of the 1992 intake, he is a "mainstream sceptic".

As a whip, Fox was allocated to the Treasury, which meant that he was in regular contact with Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor. He is thus well-placed to sense the party's views on Europe, as he would have had to defend the Chancellor's determination to keep the Government's options open on a single European currency to col-

leagues calling for Mr Clarke's blood.

Fox was only 30 when he was elected as MP for Woodspring, between Bristol and Weston-super-Mare, and was a GP before he came to Westminster. JR

**John Bawis**: A dripping wet, intelligent and quietly articulate workhorse of the junior ministerial ranks, John Bawis is being given the chance to shine in Steven Norris's high-profile job at the Transport department.

In his maiden speech in the Commons he urged a better deal for pensioners, and did not join the Government until 1993, after four years as unpaid aide to leading One Nation minister David Hunt. For three years he has toiled in the unglamorous parts of the Department of Health, dealing with children and mental health.

Aged 50, his political career began as a party agent in Leicestershire in 1968. He was national organiser of the Federation of Conservative Students when it was a bastion of the Wets, and he went on to be "director of community affairs" at Conservative Central Office in the late 1970s. He was a Tory councillor in Kingston in the early 1980s. JR

### Who's in and who's out - the full list

IN: David Willetts, Paymaster General.  
OUT: David Heathcoat-Amory, Paymaster General.

IN: Greg Knight, Minister of State, Department of Trade.  
OUT: Tim Eggar.

IN: John Bawis, Under-Secretary of State, Department of Transport.  
OUT: Steven Norris.

PROMOTED:  
Phillip Oppenheim, Secretary to the Treasury.

Liam Fox, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office.  
Simon Burns, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health.  
Andrew Mackay, Deputy Chief Whip.  
Patrick McLoughlin, Roger Knapman and Richard Ottaway all move up one place in the whips' office.  
Jacqui Lait, assistant whip (former PPS to William Hague).  
Anthony Coombs, assistant whip (former PPS to Gailian Shephard).  
Peter Ainsworth, assistant whip (former PPS to Virginia Bottomley).

## SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

**Four builders who were crushed to death** under tons of rubble when an office block collapsed were unlawfully killed, an inquest heard yesterday. An inquest at Esher, Surrey, heard how a string of major faults had been found in the 27-year-old offices by builders as they carried out a facelift.

A file will now be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service, with a view to possible prosecution. Site agent Ron Martin, 58, carpenter Peter Berwick, 36, and labourers Mark Malloy, 24, and 21-year-old Richard Barnes, were all killed on 1 August last year. Angry relatives cheered the decision of the jury and said they would fight on for tougher safety laws. Supt David Dwyer of Staines police, said: "It is our intention to bring to justice those responsible and we will continue as much as we can to do that."

**The famous image of the Prince and Princess of Wales** kissing on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on their wedding day has been used by the British Safety Council to promote condoms. A poster sent out to health promotion bodies to publicise National Condom Week - 5-11 August - shows a cartoon figure of a condom in front

**Appearances can be deceptive**



of the newly-wed couple. A headline warns: "Appearances can be deceptive."

Darren Sanders, a campaign organiser for the charity said: "The photograph is a fairytale photograph of what seemed to be a fairytale marriage. It emerged later that it was a sham... and that the Prince of Wales was having an adulterous affair." It was precisely such cheating within apparently happy relationships, either by affairs or one-night-stands, which led to the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, he added. *Marianne Macdonald*

**A convicted sex offender has been charged with the** rape and murder of Caroline Dickinson, the 13-year-old Cornish girl who was attacked while on a trip to France. It was announced yesterday. The man, a vagrant in his 40s, is reported to have confessed to the crimes after he was picked up by French police on Saturday. He has a criminal record for rape and other sexual offences. Caroline was found raped and smothered in her bed last Thursday at the youth hostel in the town of Pleine Fougères. Four friends sharing the same dormitory discovered her body. *Jason Bennetto*

**The television regulator is expected to ask ITN** to justify its interview with the Prime Minister last week, following a complaint by the Labour Party. Labour complained that the seven-minute interview, which led the *News at Ten* bulletin on the night of the TWA 747 crash off New York, broke the legal requirement on ITN to preserve "due impartiality".

The Independent Television Commission is believed to have accepted that ITN has a case to answer, despite the assertion by Stewart Purvis, the ITN chief executive, that "there was absolutely no deal... about where the interview would be placed in the programme". Labour officials claim that the interview was "soft" and that an equivalent interview was not offered to Tony Blair, the Labour leader. *John Rentoul*

**Benefits may cease to be backdated** to the date of claim, if claimants fail to provide all the necessary information when they first apply. Proposals disclosed yesterday outline dramatic changes to the social security decision-making and appeals system.

Sixty per cent of income support claims are filed in wrongly, and "individuals will need to take proper responsibility for providing relevant evidence to the department," said Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security. The Child Poverty Action Group said it would be anxious to ensure that individual rights were not lost in the review. *Nicholas Timmins*

**British sex tourists who abuse children abroad will** face prosecution in the UK under proposals announced yesterday. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, also announced plans to extend British courts' powers to try foreign extremists and terrorists resident in the UK who plan or incite crimes abroad.

The proposed legislation on paedophiles follows mounting outcry over British paedophiles who travel to countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka specifically to seek sex with child prostitutes. Victims, witnesses and police in child sex cases could be flown to the UK or give evidence via satellite link. *Jason Bennetto*

**Any chance of averting 24-hour strikes on the** London Underground, tomorrow and Monday, seemed to evaporate yesterday as insults flew between the protagonists. Lew Adams, general secretary of Aslef, the train drivers' union, accused management of being "sick and incompetent" and London Underground replied that he had been "thumping through the playground guide to insults".

London Underground was still keen to take the dispute over working time to arbitration, but Aslef wanted to resume less formal talks at conciliation service Acas. Meanwhile attempts continued at Acas to head off Friday's postal stoppage and to avoid a month-long suspension of the Royal Mail's monopoly on delivering letters. *Barrie Clement*

**Members of the pop group The Charlatans were** "devastated" last night following the death of their keyboard player Rob Collins in a car crash. Collins, 32, died after the red BMW he was driving left the road near Monmouth, Gwent, on the way to a recording session late on Monday night.

The band only recently returned to triumphant chart-topping form after years in the wilderness, and were due to feature as special guests on Oasis' summer tour in a few weeks.

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# Judge: PC needs 'ticking off' for assaults

LOUISE JURY

A judge was widely condemned as biased and out of touch yesterday after he halted the case against a policeman accused of indecently assaulting colleagues.

Judge Alistair McCallum said "no serious purpose is being served by airing what goes on in busy police stations" after hearing allegations that Constable Robert Bridle, of the West Yorkshire force,

grabbed the breasts of two female colleagues. Bradford Crown Court was told that on another occasion PC Bridle sat astride one of the women and tried to pull her towards him as if for a kiss.

But directing not guilty verdicts on four charges of indecent assault, the judge said he was concerned the case was "more likely to do harm to the police force than any good".

He said the appropriate way of dealing with an officer was for

a superior officer "to give him a sound ticking off and make sure he doesn't behave in a way which most people find unacceptable". The judge added: "It does seem to me there's been one standard for a police officer and one standard for a civilian."

After the trial, Lynne Toland, the detective chief inspector who investigated the case, accused the judge of "taking the system of justice back 40 years" and said his comments were "bi-

ased, crass, prejudicial, outdated and completely out of order".

She said: "To suggest that a ticking off was more appropriate when you are dealing with an experienced mature police officer who is alleged to have indecently assaulted a colleague, is tantamount to an invitation to all other male officers to touch up their female colleagues."

Norman Bettison, the assistant chief constable of West Yorkshire, said disciplinary action against PC Bridle, 41, who

has been suspended for two years, would be "robustly pursued". He went on: "The force stands by its decision to bring the case to court and hopes this sends a clear signal that any form of physical abuse or harassment is totally unacceptable." PC Bridle had denied all charges.

The case was the second time in two months that sexual harassment allegations have been made against West Yorkshire police officers. In May, PC Karen Wade lost a claim of sex

discrimination against the force and three officers. She is expected to appeal. Her industrial tribunal in Leeds heard there was a "culture of sexual harassment" in the force.

Yesterday, Mr Justice McCallum said evidence showed "a fair degree of horseplay took place during the canteen breaks between officers of both sexes".

The jury was told by one of the police officers that a male officer had made a joke in the Halifax station canteen in Sep-

tember 1994 about the size of her breasts. She described how PC Bridle had asked to see them and, despite her efforts to protect herself with her arms across her front, he put his hands up underneath hers and held her breasts.

She said bawdy banter was normal at the station and she was not particularly upset by it - but I felt that Bob Bridle's actions went a step further."

Julie Bindel, of the pressure group Justice for Women, said

the judge should resign. "The trivialising of sexual assaults on women gives men a clear message - that they can do this and get away with it."

But Jean Smith, of Rights of Women, a legal policy unit, said if a judge resigned every time such a comment was made there would be none left. "What judges really need is training to recognise and understand the sort of issues involved in a case like this. And we do need to have more women judges."

In from the cold: Now they are no longer spreading the communist web old agents have turned to revealing their secrets

## Travel KGB and spy on the world

HELEN WOMACK  
Moscow

IT'S amazing what you can read in Russia now that the censor has put away his pencil. Traders hawk all manner of books, from guides to tantric sex, to translations of Barbara Cartland.

But the most bizarre book of the season, which was launched with a signing ceremony at the Moskva book shop this week, has to be *The KGB's Travel Guide to the cities of the world*.

For decades, KGB agents were among the very few Soviet citizens privileged enough to experience life on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Now, seven retired spies offer their tips on how to dress, where to eat and what to see to a new generation of Russians who are about to travel abroad.

The book, published with

Colonel Lyubimov says he'd rather eat fish and chips than see Les Misérables

the permission of the Lubyanka, headquarters of the security services now called the FSB, is light-hearted and gives away no real secrets. Former agents in Paris, Rome, London, Cairo, New York, Mexico City and Bangkok simply recount anecdotes from their days in the field.

For a travel guide, the book is short on maps and pictures. But it costs only 19,500 roubles (£3), well within the reach of ordinary Russians, most of whom are armchair travellers as their meagre salaries do not stretch to foreign jaunts.

The section on Cairo is introduced by Lev Bausin, who appears in a passport photograph looking unmistakably Soviet despite his disguise of Arab headgear. Mikhail Brazhdonov reminisces about the wonderful *moules à la provençale* he ate in Paris, but advises his fellow Russians to seek their restaur-

ants away from the Montmartre area because it is overrun with noisy tourists.

His colleague in New York, Oleg Brykin, had a harder time. He remembers that his KGB allowance was so small that he had to take sandwiches with him on a train trip to Chicago. On another occasion, he nearly got eaten himself when he went to meet an agent by the lion's cage at the Bronx Zoo, only to discover this was a park where the animals roamed freely.

For British readers, of course, the most interesting chapter is Mikhail Lyubimov's memoir of his time in London in the early 1960s before he was expelled for "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status". After that, his career went from bad to worse, as he was the careless controller of the spy Oleg Gordievsky who spectacularly defected to Britain in 1985. But Colonel Lyubimov, who has already helped to supplement his meagre KGB pension by publishing one book of memoirs, looks back on it all with a gentle humour.

In order to contribute to the guide book, he was allowed to return to Britain and he goes down memory lane with an old friend identified only as Chris from Hampstead. The two are riding into central London from Heathrow Airport. "Do you know who you've got in the back of the cab?" Chris asks the Scottish taxi driver. "He's a former KGB colonel, a dangerous spy who in his time recruited Tories left and right."

"Good on yer," says the driver. "Those damned Tories have ruined the country."

"Poor people from the north of England do not like the Tories," Colonel Lyubimov explains to his readers "I felt very satisfied, I did not work in vain."

The colonel returns to all his old haunts, including Hyde Park where he used to chat up British women, passing himself off as a Swede. He visits the House of Commons and describes the debates there, which once thrilled him, as tame in comparison with the fist fights in today's Russian parliament.

Chris wants to take him to the musical, *Les Misérables*, but he says he has had his fill of revolutions and prefers to eat fish

and chips, the best of an otherwise dull British cuisine, and go to pubs.

In the Sherlock Holmes pub on Baker Street he advises vodka-drinking Russians to persevere with whisky as it will reward them in the end. "Scottish whisky demands patience," he says. "It's like learning to love Richard Strauss. When you acquire the taste, you will go from Johnny Walker to the single malts."

The only piece of trade craft that Colonel Lyubimov reveals is that Harrods is an excellent place to lose anyone who might be following you because it is crowded and has many entrances, exits, emergency exits and changing rooms. But he advises against shoplifting there. Because of the threat of Irish bombs, he says, the shop is as riddled with security personnel as a "cake is stuffed with raisins".

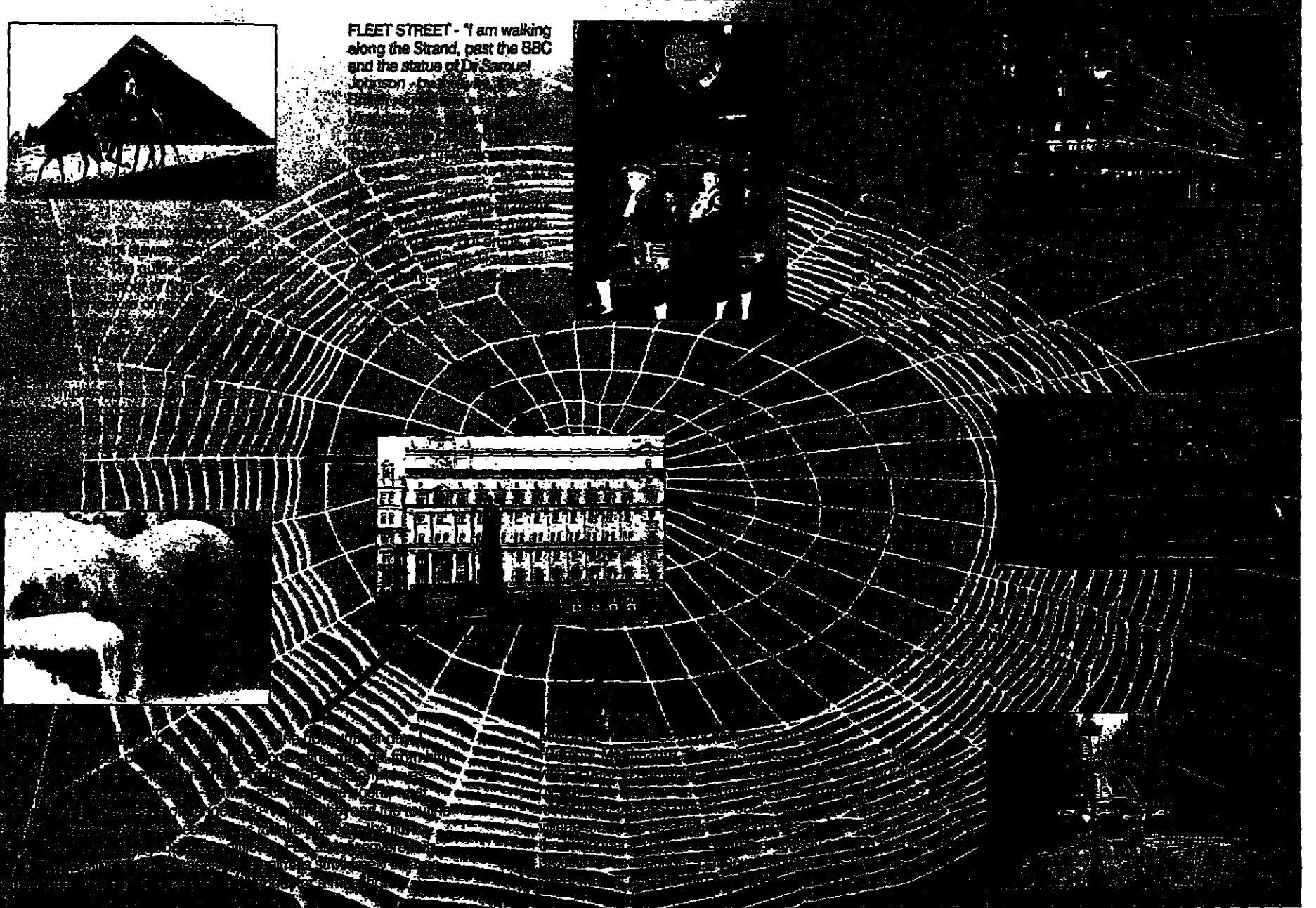
Colonel Lyubimov, who confesses to a "strange love for England" is, in many ways, more English than the average contemporary English person, al-

though he mistakes Dr. Samuel Johnson for a "great Victorian" in his section on the famous Cheshire Cheese pub off Fleet Street.

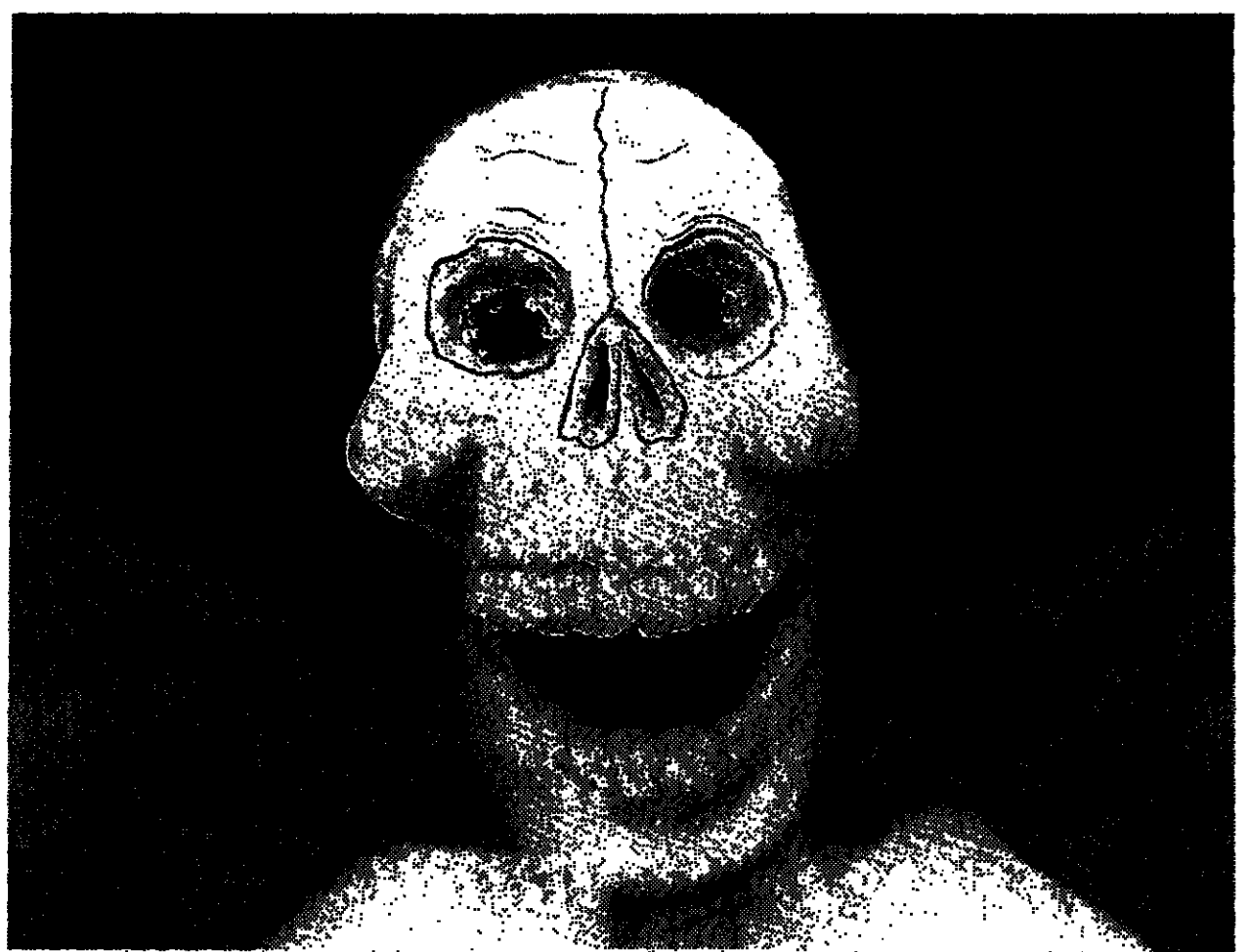
The colonel goes shopping to replenish his wardrobe with his favourite flannel trousers and tweed jacket, constantly quotes TS Eliot as he wanders the streets of London and expresses nostalgia for empire - not only Soviet, but British too. He's full of contempt for the rich new Russians who, he discovers, have poured into London and only shop on Bond Street "where it is considered in poor taste to hang price tags on the goods".

Some of the new Russians disturb him in his hotel. One of his countrywomen asks him in broken English if she can borrow money until the next morning to continue her gambling. He replies in his best Oxford accent that he only has a credit card on him.

"Leave him alone," says the woman's husband. "Can't you see he's just a mean Englishman?"



FLEET STREET - 'I am walking along the Strand, past the BBC and the statue of Dr Samuel Johnson' - the colonel



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## Appeal of electronic organiser leaves Filofax looking thin

LOUISE JURY

It would not be the first time the death of the Filofax has been predicted. With the demise of the Yuppie, the classic Eighties organiser did look in peril.

But it clawed its way back, transforming its market from City types with mobiles to women who found its ring-bound pages handy for organising their social and domestic lives.

When the Filofax Group yesterday warned that its first-half profits would not be as good as those in the same period last year, share prices dropped immediately.

But Robin Field, the chief executive who has masterminded an increase in sales to 2 million a year compared to 200,000 at the height of the Yuppie boom, was confident that the note of caution said nothing about the Filofax itself.

The main reason for the profits warning was a one-off reduction in demand from the company's main British customer, understood to be WH Smith, after a stock-taking exercise, he said.



The rivals: Psion vs Filofax

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

The Filofax itself was still "relevant to people's needs", he added. Neither was there any image problem. "Some of the most image-conscious people still use them. In Germany, for example, where people are very conscious of image and having the right sort of goods our sales are still growing extremely fast."

The company expected sales to be up 10 per cent on last year, Mr Field said. "But that is not as much up as we've been used to growing in the past five years."

Nonetheless, there is a battle in the market-place for the right to organise people's lives, with the electronic personal organiser increasingly attracting the attention of the busy executive.

A spokeswoman for Psion, the market leaders which on average makes 25,000 personal organisers a month, said: "People who want the latest technology go for Psion and we know from the feel of the market that it is mostly males, aged from 25 to 60."

The devices appeal to women

too, however. Tricia Topping, who has a public relations company and meets other professional women through the City Women's Network, said she would die without hers.

"More and more people will be switching over to electronic organisers," she said. "You have to go to the gym to get somebody with muscles to carry your Filofax. They've had their day."

But Peter York, a commentator on style, retains an affection for the leather-bound ring-file organiser and feels predictions of its demise are exaggerated. "Filofax has shown very respectable profits over the last two years," he said.

He thought it was journalists who were dismissing "symbols of the Eighties", not the rest of the population. "In the real world, there are lots of things that the Eighties gave people that they're quite keen to go on having - like the Filofax."

People might not be flashing the Filofax as a status symbol at clubs such as the Groucho any more. "But you certainly wouldn't want to show off a Psion," he said. "You just use it."

Filofax crash, page 16



# BSE sheep can pass disease to offspring

SARAH HELM  
Brussels

Fears that sheep throughout Europe could be infected with BSE, the agent of mad cow disease, have been confirmed by a wide range of scientists, continuing to grow yesterday as confused statements in Brussels failed to ease the alarm.

Although European Commission officials insisted that a proposed ban on sheep brains, spleen and nervous tissue was "precautionary", they said little to reassure consumers that lamb and mutton is completely safe to eat.

Publicly, commission spokesmen attempted to play down the dangers of BSE in sheep, raised on Monday when Franz Fischler, the agriculture commissioner, proposed a European Union ban on sheep offal.

Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister, who will announce Government measures to tackle any BSE risk from sheep today, also denied there was a threat from British lamb and declared it safe to eat yesterday.

He said: "What we are dealing with is a theoretical risk. It has been found that it is possible to transmit BSE to sheep and therefore out of an abundance of caution the various advisers have recommended that we exclude various parts of the carcass which are not actually eaten anyway."

However, the private assessments made yesterday by senior Commission veterinary experts suggests far deeper concern.

From the few facts available, it is clear that the European Commission's proposal to ban sheep offal, announced on Monday, was based on firm new scientific evidence that sheep can be infected with mad cow disease. The evidence stems from laboratory research and there is no proof yet that any

farm-reared sheep have become infected. Commission experts said yesterday, however, that this scientific evidence is worrying because it shows that if sheep are infected with BSE, the disease can be transmitted from mother to offspring - which has not been proved to happen in cattle.

Infected sheep would pose a greater risk to human health because the "dosage" of the lethal BSE protein found in the sheep organs during the experimental infection was far higher than the dosage in cattle. The disease was also found in more organs in sheep than it has been in cattle, including the placenta.

Commission experts also say that it is "impossible" to know for sure if sheep are contracting BSE or not, because scrapie - the nervous disease common in sheep - produces similar symptoms and post-mortems are rarely carried out. If sheep are contracting BSE it would probably be through eating infected cattle offal. Although this offal is now banned in the EU the ban has not been wholly effective.

Commission spokesmen insisted yesterday that once action had been taken to remove the "at-risk organs" from lamb and

older sheep the meat itself would be safe to eat. However, the Commission could not explain why the same approach was not applied to cattle, where BSE was also said to be only present in certain organs and not in the meat itself. There was no guidance about the safety of sheep meat now, before the precautions are in place. And there was no guidance about how often the "at-risk" organs find their way into human food.

The evidence which sparked Mr Fischler's announcement that sheep may also contract BSE was gathered by the Edinburgh Institute of Animal

Health, and published in the *Veterinary Record* on 1 June. The research showed that sheep, fed with minced brains of cattle infected with BSE, could contract the disease.

BSE in cattle is thought to be caused by feeding the animals with sheep offal infected with scrapie. The Edinburgh research is understood to be the first proof that BSE can be passed back to sheep. Whereas scrapie is not believed to pose any risk to humans, BSE does.

The Edinburgh evidence was worrying enough for France to ban the consumption of sheep offal some weeks ago. The

Dormont committee, the French government's scientific advisory body, is believed to have recommended the French ban partly on the basis of the Edinburgh research.

The Edinburgh evidence was also thought worrying enough by a BSE expert group which reports to the EU's scientific veterinary committee, to urge Mr Fischler to call for a ban of the sheep offal throughout the EU.

The Commission proposal for a ban on the sheep offal will be discussed by member states at the next meeting of the Standing Veterinary Committee in about two weeks' time.

## Crisis brings the hammer down for last time at sale

KATE WATSON-SMYTH

George Lake has been coming to market at King's Lynn for 70 years. Before that, his father joined his grandfather there on Tuesday. But George will not be coming any more.

Yesterday the 300-year-old market in the small Norfolk town held its final auction - as the BSE crisis forced its closure.

Prices of livestock have fallen so low that the market's owner, Barry Hawkins, can no longer afford to stay in business.

At the beginning of the year, Mr Hawkins would regularly auction about 80 cattle for an average of 125p a kilo (57p a pound). Two months later, he was selling 20 animals for 100p a kilo. Not good news for a man who works on commission.

Mr Hawkins blames the closure on the Government's handling of the BSE crisis. "It is a very sad day - it really is the end of an era. I feel very sorry for the small farmers," he said.

More than 100 farmers gathered under the leaden Norfolk

sky for the market's last sale. They stood in knots of four and five, shaking their heads and remembering the old days, not so long ago, when the racket from more than 1,000 cattle and sheep would all but drown their conversation.

Mr Lake had no animals to sell yesterday but he wanted to say goodbye. Watching the farmers unload their stock, he admitted to feeling nervous about the future.

"I suppose I shall have to find another market, but Lynn was so convenient for me. The atmosphere here has always been so friendly and I shall miss it," he said. "We always looked forward to market day."

Most of the farmers were resigned to the fact that they would have to travel further to sell their livestock, but they remained philosophical. Brian Reynolds, a foreman at a large farm in nearby Swaffham, said: "There is an overwhelming feeling of sadness, but there's no point being angry at something we can do nothing about."



End of the line: One of the last animals to be sold at King's Lynn market which held its closing sale yesterday, as the BSE scare continued to take its toll. Photograph: Brian Harris

Meanwhile, in the auction house, Mr Hawkins was preparing notes for his final sale. "I don't normally bother with any speeches, but today is different, and I want to thank everybody for their loyalty," he said.

By the time he rose to speak, the yard was packed. And when he repeated his assertion that the Government was to blame, there were loud cheers.

Patricia Parris, who had travelled up from Ongar, Essex,

with six cattle, agreed with him. Five years ago she had 500 head of cattle. By March of this year she had reduced the numbers to 220, and since the EU ban she has been selling them as fast as she can. "I'm giving up and

getting out," she said. "Nobody thought the crisis would last this long but now I can't see an end to it... The Government should have been in control of this situation a long time ago." It took just over an hour for

all the cattle to be sold. The last lot was a Belgian Blue, number 43, weighing in at 595kg. The bidding picked up as two farmers battled for the honour of buying the last animal to be sold at King's Lynn.

A hush descended as bidding passed 200p. The final price was 253p, and King's Lynn supplier John Fowler walked away in triumph, smiling as he joined the other farmers shuffling slowly out of the market.

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Richard Branson and "Tracker" scan the horizon for hassle-free savings

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The company's first product - an index tracking Personal Equity Plan (or PEP for short) - was created as a result of Richard Branson's frustration with the financial services industry. "I read the personal finance pages for 20 years but could never find consistently good performance or fathom out all the meaningless jargon," explains Branson.

### Jargon free zone

PEPs should be an integral part of most people's financial plans. But Virgin felt that their potential had never been realised - mainly because of their packaging. "We researched nearly 1,000 PEPs and then designed one to beat them," adds Branson. "We found that the majority of people were simply put off by the way PEPs were shrouded in meaningless financial jargon."

Within a year of launch, Virgin's no-nonsense financial revolution had attracted over 70,000 savers looking for a well-balanced, conservative approach to stock market investment rather than chancing the thrills and spills of a speculative investment strategy.

### On the right track

Virgin's strategy is completely straightforward. It doesn't rely on costly, fallible fund managers attempting to guess which shares will perform best. The Virgin Direct PEP tracks the FT-SE Actuaries All-Share Index, which covers more than 900 of the largest companies quoted on the London Stock Exchange.

### Simplicity

Rowan Gormley of Virgin Direct picks up the story: "We've made it incredibly simple for individual investors to participate in the returns of the stock market while spreading the risk. The easy option is to leave spare cash in a current account, earning a pitifully low rate of interest. Most of us just can't be bothered to go through the hassle of looking for a better home for our savings, even though we know that it's the sensible thing to do. With history showing that shares tend to provide better returns than other types of investment over five years or more, our Growth PEP gives everyone the chance to reap the rewards!"

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"Basically, we've designed our regular savings PEP for people who know they really should be saving, but have never quite got around to doing anything about it!" says Rowan Gormley.

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Richard Branson

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Britpop rides high: The Mercury prize is dedicated to innovation but the shortlist of 10 albums is daringly predictable



Courtney Pine: Flying the flag for jazz in the 'top 10'

## Blur in Different Class to Preachers and Pine

ANDREW MUELLER

Albums by Oasis and Pulp were in a top 10 announced yesterday of contenders for the prestigious Mercury Music Prize, but their rivals Blur failed to be ranked.

Dubbed the Booker of the music world, the £25,000 prize was set up by Mercury Communications in 1992 to honour the best album released by a British or Irish artist in the previous year, as part of a "commitment to innovation and excellence in the arts".

Whether the prize, whose winner this year will be announced on 10 September, has been responsible for any innovative or excellent art is a moot point. All but one of those chosen by the panel of 10 chaired by the music critic Simon Frith fall into the same unofficial categories from which contenders have been drawn in recent years.

### Contenders for the musical crown

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ■ Pulp - Different Class                      | ■ Story - Morning Glory?  |
| ■ Underworld - Second Toughest in the Infants | ■ Sir Peter Maxwell Davies - The Beltane Fire and Caroline Mathilde |
| ■ Courtney Pine - Modern Day Jazz Stories     | ■ Mark Morrison - Return of the Mack                                |
| ■ Manic Street Preachers - Everything Must Go | ■ Black Grape - It's Great When You're Straight... Yeah!            |
| ■ Norma Waterson - Norma Waterson             | ■ Artists for War Child - Help                                      |
| ■ Oasis - (What's the                         |   |

In the Bleeding Obvious Choices That Nobody Could Possibly Object To corner are the riches of the Britpop aristocracy: Oasis and Pulp, plus Black Grape's *It's Great When You're Straight... Yeah!* and Manic Street Preachers' *Everything Must Go*. Three of the previous four Mercury winners (Primal Scream in 1992, Suede in 1993, Portishead last year) have come from this short-odds end of

the line-up. Oasis must fancy their chances.

Bearing the flag for the Jazz And/Or Folk Albums Which Lead Proceedings Some Credibility But Really Don't Have A Prayer is Courtney Pine's *Modern Day Jazz Stories* and Norma Waterson's self-titled solo album. They should enjoy the dinner, anyway.

Occupying the Populist Dance-Type Album Included

To Prove This Thing Isn't The Preserve Of White Boys With Guitars is Mark Morrison's *Return Of The Mack*. Carrying on where Letfield's *Leftism* left off last year in the Maverick Techno Record We Don't Really Understand But Read Something About In Melody Maker department is Underworld's *Second Toughest In The Infants*, which may be worth a dark-horse bet. It's certainly got more of a chance than this year's Record By Surreally Obscure Classical Kinda Artist, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Beltane Fire*.

Which leaves *Help*, recorded in a day by various Britpop luminaries, and Paul McCartney. It looks unbecomingly. The trouble is, although *Help* contains moments of brilliance, it is, by definition, also very patchy. Do Mercury really want to reward good intentions over achievement?



Outsider: Norma Waterson has little chance of the prize

## Statue snub in the battle over Britten

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Arts Correspondent

Proposals to erect a statue of the composer Benjamin Britten in the graveyard where he is buried were turned down by the town council, in an apparent snub, it emerged yesterday.

Britten, in his day the first major composer to be born in England for 300 years, was one of the greatest opera composers of this century. He lived in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, for 30 years and is buried there.

But when the district council suggested putting up a statue or bust to honour him, Aldeburgh town council rejected the idea and discussed the options of planting trees, putting up a bird table or erecting a statue of a fisherman to emphasise the town's fishing heritage.

The decision, communicated to Suffolk Coastal district council in a letter, has surprised and angered Britten's admirers, who claim that if it was not for the composer few would have heard of the town.

Britten and his life-long companion Peter Pears set up the Aldeburgh Festival which performs much of Britten's music and attracts musicians from all over the world.

Aldeburgh's town clerk, Andrew Harris, explained

yesterday: "It is not as if Benjamin Britten was born and bred in Aldeburgh - he was born in Lowestoft."

"We have several other well-known people who were born here, such as George Crabbe, the poet, and Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson, Britain's first woman doctor."

"We want people to know that there is more to Aldeburgh than just Benjamin Britten. We have just spent £12,000 on a new play area which is of more practical benefit to the town and its people than a statue or bust."

"We are not anti-Britten, but if there is money available councillors felt that there were other things to spend it on which would be of greater benefit to the town and its people."

"There are already several things to commemorate him in the town. There is a blue plaque on the side of the house where he lived and a window dedicated to him in the parish church."

John Richardson, a member of Suffolk Coastal district council, said he had been surprised by the town council's reaction. But it had later emerged that Britten had not wanted such a tribute, he said.

However, a local Britten historian, who asked not to be named, observed: "There seems to be a feeling among council members that his contribution to the town was highly debatable."

"Just because he wasn't born and bred here and didn't live here all the time they doubt his value. It is dreadful that such a great man should be subjected to such an apparent snub."

Britten was born in 1913 and moved to Aldeburgh after the end of the Second World War. Some of his most famous works including the operas *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd* and *Noye's Fludde*, are set on the Suffolk coast.

He underwent heart surgery in 1973 and never fully recovered. He died in December 1976, six months after he had been made Baron Britten of Aldeburgh in the Queen's Birthday Honours.



At rest in Aldeburgh: The composer Benjamin Britten

### DAILY POEM

July

By Jacques Réda

On the dial of the months which turn and return  
Deluding sometimes as to the flavour of the seasons  
(Those January springs, October and its abundance),  
July belongs not to time but to space.

Time seems to have hoisted it onto a shield  
And with the broad but slow and single stroke of the wing  
It takes flight while the early sun  
Following its curve would never (as you see

When you say: come on, just another mile;  
The trees on the path are still hardly darkened,  
The bank is still in flame where evening has lodged)  
Leave the horizon's edge and disappear.

Long will it leave its rays to wander secretly  
Throughout the countryside and in the rivers' waters  
And we will no longer know how to tell the borders  
Between two skies on fire each lighting the other.

Then, slowly looming in the enormous star-studded  
Volume, will rise to weigh the warmth  
Of the limpid air and the luminous pallor  
Of the roads, the untroubled scale of the moon.

Jacques Réda was born in 1929 and for a long time worked as a reader for France's most prestigious publisher Editions Gallimard. His "calendrier élégiaque", a masterly slope through the months and seasons, appears in a bi-lingual collection from Bloodaxe (£10.95) of *The New French Poetry*, edited by David Keiley and Jean Khalifa.

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## news

## Nurses may operate with patients' consent

Doctors were reminded yesterday to follow strict rules when allowing nurses and other non-medical staff to carry out simple operations.

A report from the British Medical Association said it was important for the different specialist professions to agree clear guidelines on how surgical procedures can be conducted by staff who are not doctors.

The BMA's joint consultants

committee (JCC), which represents all the Royal Colleges, said tasks should only be given to staff who are appropriately trained and supervised, and in all cases the patient must be kept informed.

The JCC said the guidelines should provide a framework designed to "set and maintain the necessary standards of education, limits of responsibility and scope of practice to ensure

both satisfactory service and patient safety".

A patient's consent had to be obtained before a non-medically qualified health practitioner could perform an operation.

The JCC also said:

- The approved list of minor surgical procedures that a non-medically qualified person may perform must be precisely defined and not changed without agreement.

■ Non-medically qualified practitioners trained in surgical techniques should be specially registered and supervised under an extended disciplinary code.

■ A non-medically qualified member of staff undertaking surgery should be under the overall supervision of a doctor.

■ Any patient being operated on by a non-medically qualified member of staff must always be informed of the training and sta-

tus of the practitioner, and sign a consent form before the procedure goes ahead.

Sir Rodney Sweetnam, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, said: "Animals are protected from having any operation on any part of their body than by anyone other than a fully trained vet. But the public does not have the same protection. It's an anomaly."

Professor Sir Norman

Browse, chairman of the JCC, said: "We have become concerned at a number of non-medically qualified staff have been expanding their duties and carrying out tasks which they are not strictly qualified to do."

"Our concern is not that they should not do these tasks, but if they do expand their role, they must be properly trained, follow a strict protocol and be supervised."

Britain is the only country in Europe that does not have strict regulation governing this area of medicine.

The doctors denied the delegation of some minor operations was prompted by staff and financial shortages. But Dr Michael Brindle, President of the Royal College of Radiology, said that the problem should be seen "against the background of an increasing demand for medical

work, which exceeds the capacity of the medical workforce".

They also denied that the guidelines constituted protectionism, designed to safeguard surgeons.

Liz Jenkins, director of policy and practice at the Royal College of Nursing, said: "It is both welcome and relevant for nurses to perform medical procedures, where they have been given appropriate training."

## Thames Path opens at length to walkers

MATTHEW BRACE

Today the Thames Path National Trail will be opened after seven years of effort, bringing to completion a plan for Londoners and others to be able to walk along the entire length of the river.

The 180-mile path, one of 12 in the National Path network created by the Countryside Commission and local authorities, runs all the way from the source of the river to the Thames Barrier in Woolwich, south-east London.

Opening up the Thames Path has cost a total of £1.2m. The pedestrian way has been created by the Commission and the Environment Agency (formerly the National Rivers Authority).

The path runs the length of the Thames from its source, the Isis, which rises in a field near Kemble in Gloucestershire, on the edge of the Cotswolds, and follows its winding route across southern England, into and through London, past the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, to the strikingly futuristic structure of the Thames Barrier at Woolwich, south east of the capital.

For a few miles on its journey through the shires, the river forms the border between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, before heading north to Oxford



Sitting pretty: The Thames towpath at Runnymede, Surrey

Photograph: Edward Sykes

and south again to Berkshire, through Windsor and finally into London. The idea of giving walkers better access to the river has been around since the 1920s, when the desire was first voiced to walk it from end to end.

Increasing public demand

for recreation and access to the countryside in recent years has created the impetus to make the path a reality. New bridges have been built along the path at Temple and Bourne End near Marlow in Buckinghamshire, and at Slifford in Oxfordshire. Stiles, fences, gates

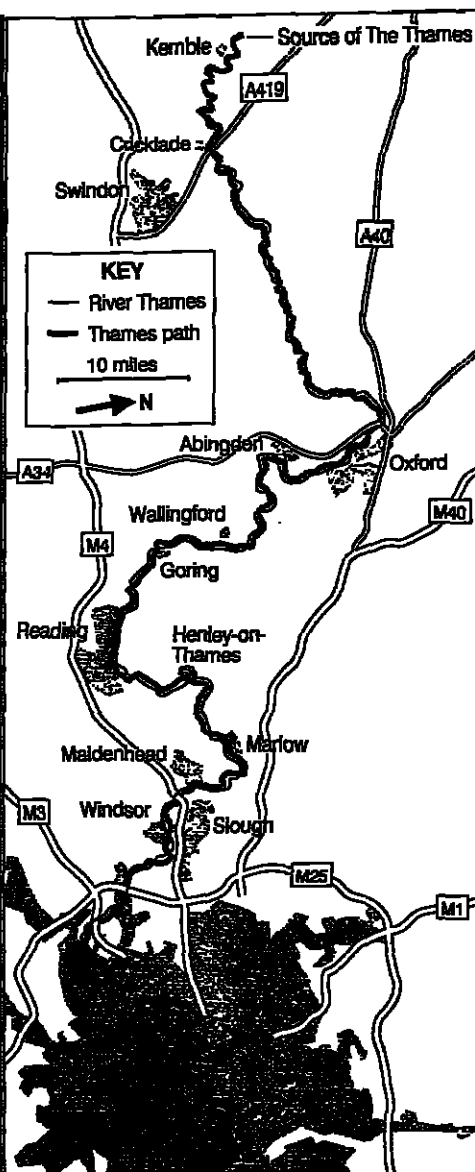
and surfacing have also been introduced to help walkers, and the path is sign-posted throughout its length.

Jane Bowden, from the Countryside Commission, admitted that there were a few sections in London which were still not as attractive as might be de-

sired, because they are redevelopment sites. "There are a few miles that aren't quite the best they could be yet, but we didn't want to keep people waiting until they were all ready, because that could take a long time," she said.

Some waterfront landlords

and residents have refused to allow the path past their doorsteps, but that will not stop determined walkers from embarking on a source-to-mouth tramp, and the Thames Path is expected to prove the most popular of the 12 National Trails.



## From extinction to new life ... kites fly again

CHARLIE BAIN

After 100 years of virtual extinction, 16 red kites were released in the east Midlands yesterday in the hope that this much-persecuted bird of prey will continue to establish a second breeding population in England.

The once common carrion-feeding bird became extinct in England and Scotland at the end of the 19th Century, with a small population clinging on in mid-Wales. The main reason for their demise was because they were persecuted by farmers and gamekeepers who saw them as vermin and a threat to livestock and gamebirds.

The releases were part of the second phase of a five-year project organised by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and government wildlife conservation organisations, which have released 200 young red kites since 1989.

During the first phase, which ended in 1994, two new breeding populations were successfully introduced in southern England and northern Scotland. At the beginning of the second phase last year, 11 kites were released in the Midlands, of which two have died.

All the birds in yesterday's reintroduction were flown in from conservation centres in Spain. They were fitted with radio transmitters and wing-tags to monitor movements and breeding patterns. Carrion will be left to help them survive the first weeks in the wild.



Red kite: back in Midlands

Mike Everett from the RSPB said: "Phase one of the operation was a great success, and apart from the two deaths last year, a survival rate of nine out of 11 isn't at all bad. We intend to release even more birds over the next three years and, hopefully, by the turn of the century we should have a lot more kites flying around."

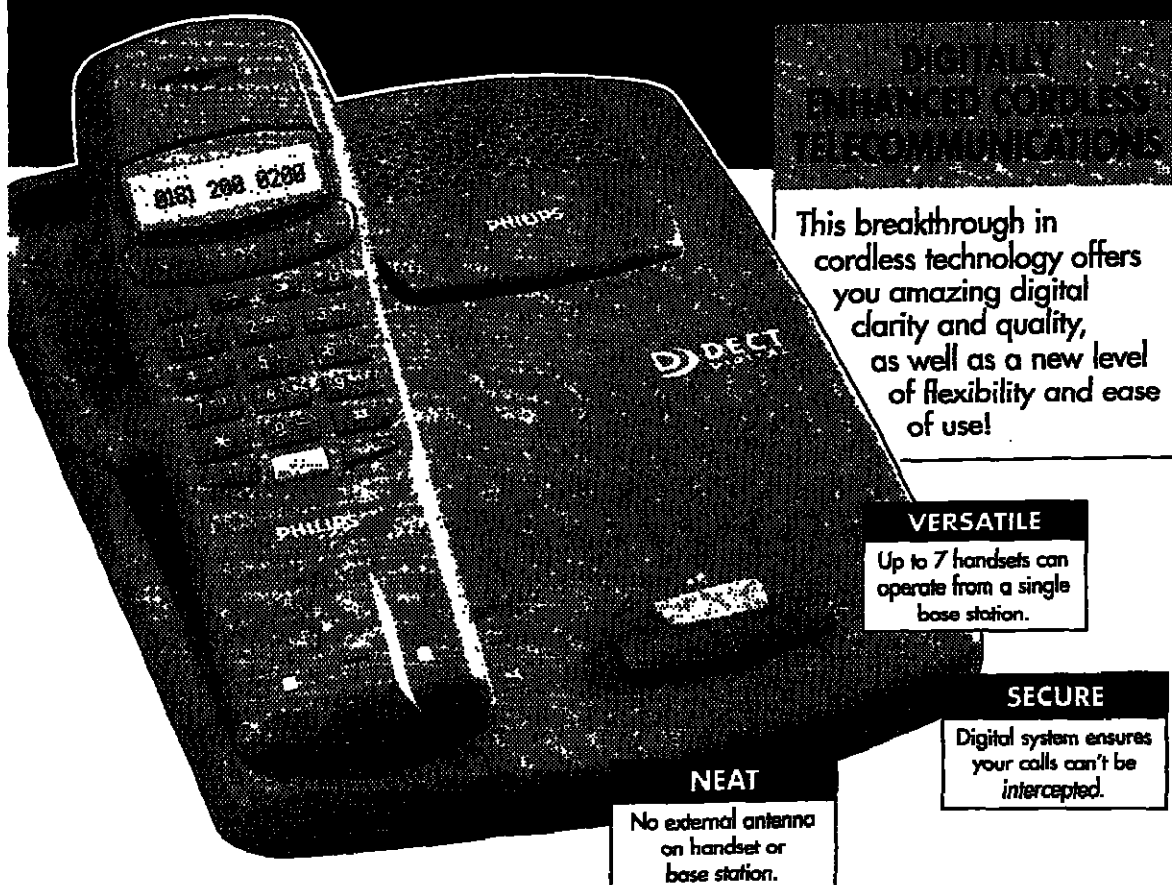
The red kite, noted for its distinctive slow wingbeat and forked tail, feeds mostly on carrion, but will also feed on earthworms, beetles and small birds and mammals.

Kites are just one of many birds of prey who are still being poisoned, trapped and shot despite government-supported campaigns against illegal persecution. The RSPB says cases of persecution rose from 115 in 1994 to 141 last year. Among the worst hit species were buzzards, peregrine falcons, hen harriers and sparrow hawks.

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## Cash warning as Blair gives pledge on local government

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

A renewal of local government but within extremely tight financial constraints was promised yesterday by Tony Blair as council leaders warned that an incoming government is poised to face deteriorating services and significantly higher council tax bills.

Local authorities will today tell John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, that councils need a £2.3bn (5 per cent) spending increase next year against the 1.5 per cent or £680m for which ministers have planned.

That "no-frills" demand comes against a bleak picture of increasing inadequacies in

services", Sir Jeremy Beecham, chairman of the Local Government Association warned. The Government's plans would produce "unacceptable consequences" for services locally. In addition, he said, their assumptions already indicated an 8 per cent council tax rise in April, and a double-digit increase just ahead of the election "cannot be excluded".

The warning came as Mr Blair told local authorities bluntly that there would be no spending spree under a Labour government. "The future of local councils will not be based on spending an increased share of the national cake," he told the first assembly of the new shadow Local Government Association in London. Instead "there

will be greater freedom for local authorities, greater competence to act on behalf of the people, greater flexibility in managing partnerships with the private sector". Local government needed to be "reinvented for a different world" - acting as an enabler and a partner but "not necessarily delivering the whole range of services" itself.

The crucial thing, Mr Blair added, was that "the public interest must come first", not "ideology or any producer interest". The compulsory element in competitive tendering will go, he confirmed but councils will have a duty to secure best value with the Audit Commission and ultimately the Secretary of State able to step in where services fail. Councils will

also be required to produce and strive for performance targets.

The Labour leader also underlined his determination to pursue the idea of elected mayors for major cities, despite accepting that the idea was "controversial". Citing a recent survey showing only 16 per cent of councillors but 70 per cent of the public in favour, he said: "It cannot be enough to reject the idea on the basis that councillors do not want them when there is such a large degree of public support."

Sir Jeremy said Mr Blair's tone appeared "warmer" than in the past, but he added: "We are approaching the last chance in local government" and the new association "had to get its message across".

## Cricketers' wives tell how racism charges have upset family life

CLARE GARNER

Emotions were running high on the seventh day of the Imran Khan libel hearing yesterday. There was laughter and tears as the wives of Allan Lamb and Ian Botham stepped into the witness box to stand by their men - followed by a hush as George Carman QC delivered a rousing speech to the jury.

Lindsay Lamb had to go it alone: her husband of 17 years had to miss her star turn because of a prior engagement. Fighting back the tears, Mrs Lamb chose her words carefully. "This is my eleventh day, my lord. Listening to all this, I've had four days with Mr Nawaz and this is another seven days I've been listening to balls," she said. The court loved it; the judge hated it. Mrs Lamb apologised for the pun.

The accusations of racism, allegedly made by Imran in an article in *India Today* in 1994, had taken their toll on the whole family, said the South African mother of three. "Can you imagine how I felt when my six-year-old daughter came home



Supporting role: Lindsay Lamb (left) and Kathy Botham



and said: 'Mummy, why doesn't daddy like black people?' Mrs Lamb said she had taught her children basic phrases in Xhosa - Nelson Mandela's native tongue - so they can be more polite to black people in South Africa when they go out there," she said.

Kathy Botham who last week sat through a rebash of the lurid details of her husband's alleged antics during their 20 year marriage, said: "It took me back to the eighties, when we

seemed to go through five or six years when our marriage was very much under the spotlight. It was hell to live with and I went through hell again last week, especially when we opened the newspapers the next day."

Last time around, their youngest daughter, Becky, now 10, was a baby. "It took me back to the times when I had to sit back with Liam and Sarah and explain everything was fine with mummy and daddy. I had to do the same with Becky."

And finally, could Mrs Botham please settle the matter of her husband's nails? "I always say when the camera pans on him on the field he would either be picking his nose or chewing his nails," she said.

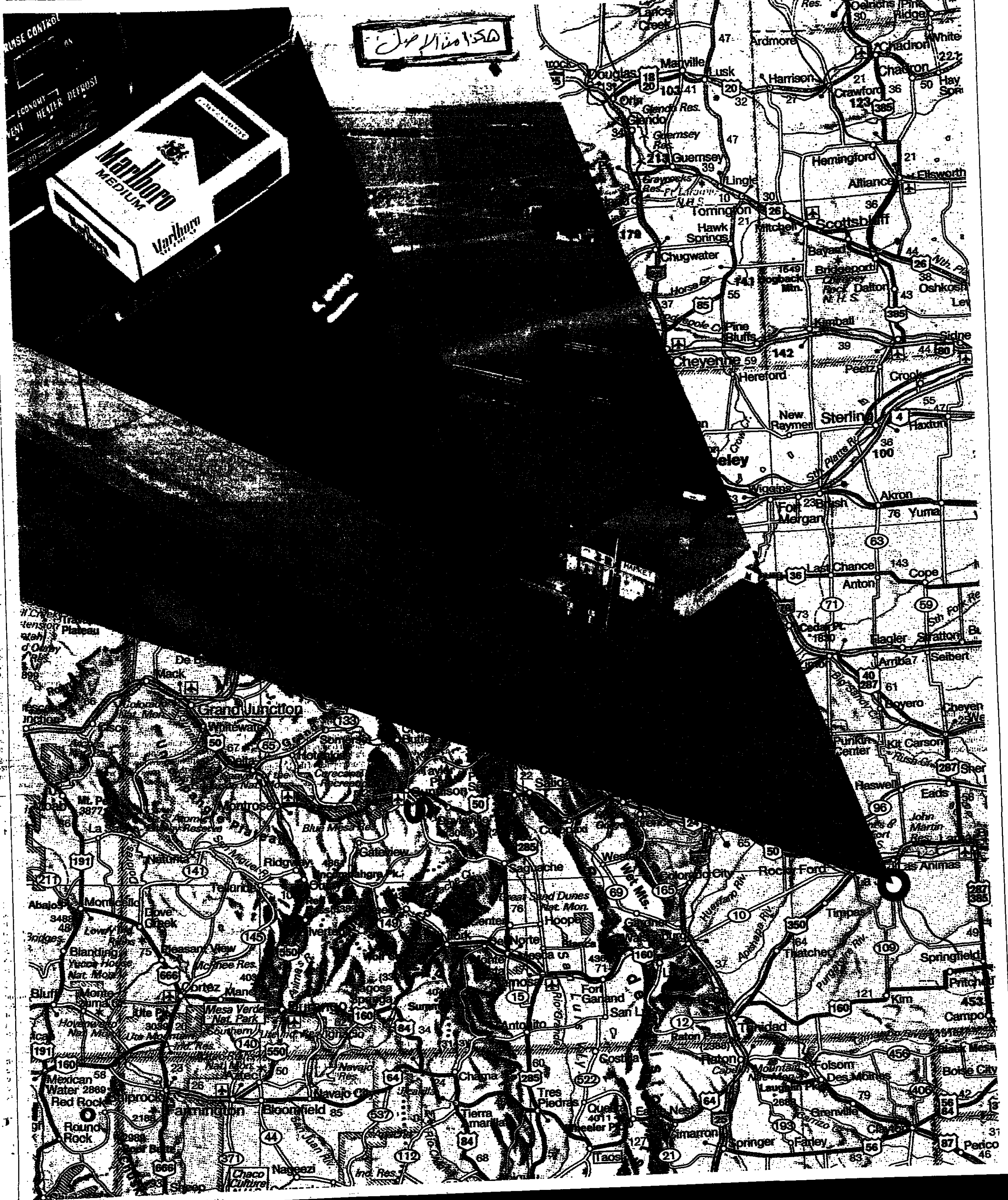
Mr Carman made no apologies for his so-called "muck-raking". In drawing the court's attention to Botham's alleged sex and drugs escapades, he said: "It's not me who brought it up. It's Ian Botham in his own book to the world at large," he said referring to Botham's autobiography, which carries the sub-title *Don't Tell Kait*.

He asked the jury to consider why the plaintiffs had rejected Imran's attempts at reconciliation. "Because the knives were already out for him and the Pakistani team," he said. "Revenge was sought for the inglorious England defeat of 1992. The knives were out and Allan Lamb and Ian Botham, for their own reasons, were prepared to join in and reject the olive branch of friendship and join in the attack on Imran Khan. That's the truth."

The hearing continues today.



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# Burundi's anger over ethnic feud explodes

David Orr sees the President stoned by mourners as he attends a funeral of massacre victims

Bugendena — The helicopter swooped low over the thousands of mourners who had gathered for the funeral of their friends and relatives, 350 members of Burundi's minority Tutsi group massacred last weekend by extremists from the Hutu majority.

The Prime Minister, Antoine Nduwayo, had arrived in Bugendena in central Burundi by helicopter earlier and was talking with the Archbishop of Gitega, Monsignor Joachim Ruhama, at the edge of the large field where the crowd was assembled.

All eyes were turned towards the helicopter as President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya stepped from it onto the ground. A small group of international journalists moved to

the front of the crowd which was being held back by soldiers armed with automatic weapons. The photographers stepped forward to record the meeting between the Tutsi Prime Minister and the Hutu President.

They barely shook hands before turning away from one another. As the President, known as Ntiba, walked across the open space, a mob of angry protesters surged forward, jeering and hissing.

"Arrest Ntiba and his acolytes immediately!" read one placard held aloft. Another featured a drawing of the President drinking Tutsi blood alongside

Leonard Nyangoma, the Hutu rebel leader blamed for massacring last weekend's massacre at Bugendena.

Many Tutsis believe the President is implicated in Hutu attacks on the Tutsi community over the last few years.

A rhythmic chanting arose from the protesters pushing towards the President, whose discomfort was quickly turning to fear. First of all they started throwing branches and sticks. Soon a hail of rocks was falling from the sky and the terrified President was beating a hasty retreat, surrounded by his armed bodyguards. Mr Nduwayo did

nothing to calm the mob. A handful of anxious soldiers circled around the retreating President, safety catches off their weapons.

As a clump of earth hit the President on the chest, his bodyguards pulled their pistols from their pockets and hustled their charge towards the waiting helicopter.

A French reporter received a deep head wound when he was struck by a brick. Other journalists had narrow escapes as the protesters lobbed more rocks and shouted slogans against the foreign media. Many Tutsis have been angered about

a French radio report earlier this week which they say fudged the issue of who is guilty for the country's largest massacre since ethnic fighting in 1993.

The President took off, never having managed to visit the two mass graves where the victims had been laid out in simple wooden coffins.

Charred bodies of men, women and children were still being pulled out of burned buildings hours before the funeral. Others were being found in the undergrowth three days after the attack by Hutu extremists. One woman, wounded in the head but still breathing, was discovered lying amongst bushes as mourners arrived to pay their respects.

The authorities now say that as many as 350 people were

butchered at Bugendena, a settlement of 1,800 Tutsis who had become displaced from their homes in 1993. Most of those who died were women and children. Many of their menfolk had perished in the fighting that followed a coup attempt by Tutsi troops three years ago.

Bugendena's inhabitants had just risen on Saturday when more than 1,000 chanting men and women descended on the community. The raiders used guns, and hacked at the residents with machetes. Grenades were thrown and many people were doused with petrol and burned alive. The attack has been blamed on Hutu peasants led by extremists of Mr Nyangoma's CNDD party. Rwandan Hutus, members of the former Rwandan army now based in Zaire, are

also said to have been involved. "These people were innocent," the Prime Minister told the 2,000 mourners. "They were killed because of their ethnic origin. Please don't take revenge. Burundians must fight for peace and avoid killing."

As Mr Nduwayo spoke a bitter murmur arose from amongst the mourners.

Having agreed to an initiative for a regional peace-keeping force to move into Burundi, the Prime Minister has said that he no longer believes foreign intervention can help the stricken country. Many Western diplomats believe that his government's days are numbered and that Mr Nduwayo could be overthrown in a coup at any time.

Reuter — International pressure was building yesterday on

Burundi not to repatriate 85,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees. A spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that Burundi had agreed to halt temporarily the forced repatriation of refugees, after appeals from the UN.

Paul Stromberg said that Burundian and Rwandan authorities had officially informed the agency of the move to end the exercise. Cramped into trucks and containers, thousands of refugees have already been dumped at the border of the homeland they now fear.

The UNHCR said more than 2,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees were returned yesterday, bringing to 13,400 the number forced back to their homeland since the expulsions began last Friday.

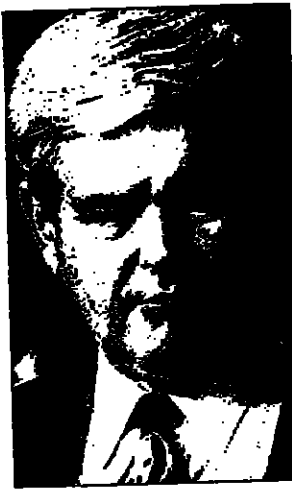
## SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

The Japanese food-poisoning epidemic dramatically worsened yesterday when within hours two people died from a bacterial infection that has made thousands ill. A 10-year-old girl and an 85-year-old woman were the first fatalities of the most serious outbreak, which started in the western town of Sakai 12 days ago. The deaths bring to seven the number of people who have died from the germ in Japan this year. Health authorities estimate that since May more than 8,000 people have come down in different parts of Japan with severe diarrhoea, vomiting and fever after contracting the O-157 colon bacteria from tainted food. Reuter — Osaka

A man armed with a knife and a pistol talked his way past security guards and entered the Atlanta Olympics opening on Friday before being caught, police said. Roland Atkins, 55, was arrested after duping guards and entering the arena, where President Bill Clinton and his family were joined by world leaders and other VIPs. The man was carrying a pistol, 11 rounds of ammunition and a knife when arrested. He was charged with criminal trespass, carrying a pistol without a licence and theft of services, which means entering the stadium without a valid ticket. Police said they were unsure how Mr Atkins, from Aurora, Colorado, talked his way past the stadium guards. It was also unclear why news of the security breach broke several days after it took place. Reuter — Atlanta

Advertisements for Perrier that were deemed sexist are to be removed from Belgian cities after women's groups attacked them. The billboards showed three topless women with Perrier bottle-caps over their nipples and the word *wonderbubbles*, slang for "wonder bubbles". "It shocked some people," said Eve Magnan, a spokeswoman at Perrier's headquarters in Paris. "It is not company policy to shock." AP — Brussels

Newt Gingrich, the conservative Speaker of the US House of Representatives, admitted that he had smoked marijuana while at university, and then urged the White House to dismiss any staff member found to have smoked crack, cocaine or taken any hallucinogenic drugs in the past three years. "I had an experience with it [marijuana] in college. It was the wrong thing to do and I shouldn't have done it," the Georgia Republican said at a fund-raising event for Representative Charlie Norwood. He said that recent sworn statements by Secret Service agents proved that some White House staffers had smoked crack or taken hallucinogenic drugs since the administration took office. Reuter — Augusta, Georgia



Gingrich: Took marijuana

French police arrested a man believed to be third in command in the Eta Basque terrorist organisation. The operation, near the Pyrenees city of Pau, which netted Julian Achiurra Egurrola and another man named as Laurence Schlecht, was conducted with the Spanish Civil Guard and follows resumption of Eta's bombing campaign in northern Spain. Madrid has asked for Mr Achiurra Egurrola's extradition. In San Sebastian, a former military cook was seriously injured by a bomb under his car. Albino Alfredo Machado Pires had until January worked at police barracks on a list of Eta targets found by police in March when they arrested an alleged Eta assassin. Mary Dejevery — Paris

Three Nigerian political activists are expected to be charged with the murder of the wife of the opposition leader Moshood Abiola. The announcement, in the government-owned *Lagos Times* newspaper, is likely to anger opposition groups, which have accused the government of unjustly implicating them in the killing last month. The three men are leading figures in the National Democratic Coalition, an organisation of political-action groups, and were arrested for questioning on 11 June. Last week a court ordered them to be freed, saying police had no evidence to hold them further. AP — Lagos

In his first meeting with a senior member of the new Israeli government, Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had talks with David Levy, the Foreign Minister, who said that he "found the Palestinians deeply interested in advancing the peace process". The meeting marks the first time the right-wing Likud party, which won the election in May, has recognised Mr Arafat and the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinians. Mr Arafat sent "a special greeting" to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, after the talks, which he described as fruitful. In Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu said that the government would finish its study on the withdrawal of the Israeli army from most of Hebron, the largest city in the southern West Bank, by the end of the week. Patrick Cockburn — Jerusalem

Getting arrested was not the worst news for a man accused of bumping a 94-year-old woman and snatching her wallet. "You just robbed the mother of the biggest Mob chieftain in New York," police Lieutenant Robert McKenna told Willie King, who was charged with grand larceny. "He had a sort of stunned, resigned look on his face, sort of saying 'How could I be so stupid?'" Li McKenna said. Mr King remained in custody. Vincent Gigante, described as the head of the Genovese clan, the most powerful US Mafia family, is awaiting trial on murder and racketeering charges. His mother, Yolanda, was mugged in Greenwich Village on Sunday as she walked with another son, Louis Gigante, a Catholic priest. AP — New York



Rest in Peace: A makeshift memorial on a Long Island beach to two victims of TWA flight 800. Investigators have still to discover the reason for the crash and aviation experts say they are now entering the 'realms of what is plausible rather than what is likely' Photograph: AP

## Plot thickens in hunt for clues to TWA crash

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

Any explanation of the cause of the TWA crash a week ago which killed 230 people is going to be fairly unbelievable, filling a new chapter in the history of aviation disasters.

While the most far-fetched theories such as a missile attack or a meteorite can probably be ruled out, the accident and the ensuing explosion are unprecedented in aviation history. Any explanation, therefore, will have to show how such an unlikely event took place. Kieran Daly of *Flight International* magazine said: "We are now in the realms of what is plausible, rather than what is likely."

The two most plausible causes remain a bomb or an un-

contained engine failure. And both are highly unlikely. The bomb theory has a number of drawbacks. First, there is the difficulty of getting a bomb with a timing device on to the plane at an airport which is one of the most security conscious in the world. The theory about a device having been put on board at Athens does not hold water since there was no reason why it should not have been set to explode on the first leg of the aircraft's journey.

Second, the devastating explosion means that either the terrorists hit very lucky or they had amazing technical knowledge and good access to the aircraft. Christopher Ronay, a former head of the FBI's bomb unit, who investigated 30 aircraft

bombings until his retirement two years ago, says he cannot recall any similar incident. "You could blow the hell out of a cargo compartment with a luggage bomb but you have to blow up a fuel cell or an engine to get an explosion like that."

Any mechanical failure which caused such instant devastation would also have to involve an engine and the fuel around it. The death of a woman and her child in a MD-88 when part of an engine disintegrated during take-off in Florida only a week before the TWA crash shows how destructive such accidents are.

Although the TWA aircraft was carrying some 48,000 gallons of fuel, the kerosene used by jets is not very explosive. It

needs to mix with air which means that one of the tanks would have to be breached.

While there have been several instances of aircraft blowing up in flight, either through mechanical faults or because of bombs, none of the explosions has been as cataclysmic as last week's event. Even at Lockerbie, where a Pan Am Boeing 747 blew up at 31,000 feet in December 1988, there was no fiery explosion until fuel-laden parts hit the ground.

In that case a small bomb, weighing just under a pound, caused the explosion but the terrorists were very fortunate. If a bomb that size had been in the hold surrounded by luggage, the plane would have survived. Other aircraft have managed to

land despite having holes punched in them by bombs, such as a TWA flight in 1986 between Rome and Athens when four people were blown out of the plane. Two similar bombings over the Pacific resulted in the deaths of single passengers, but the planes limped home.

Michael Barr, director of aviation safety at the University of Southern California, said yesterday: "These planes just don't blow up. There's too many fire walls, too many checks and balances."

Yet, explosion there was. Frank Taylor, director of Cranfield Aviation Safety Centre, says that burning fuel oil on the surface of the sea, as well as the television footage of burning

debris falling from the plane shows there was an explosion. While some reports of chemical traces suggesting a bomb were appearing in the US media, there is still no certain evidence and all the safety experts are being very cautious about coming to a firm conclusion.

The relatives of the dead on the TWA plane will probably have to wait until the discovery of the cockpit voice recorder - which will probably be more revealing than the separate flight data recorder - before the reason for the disaster is revealed.

But Mr Taylor is certain that the cause of the crash will be discovered: "It may take several weeks, but they will find out in the end," he said.

## Croats deepen Mostar divide

TONY BARBER  
Europe Editor

International efforts to reunite the southern Bosnian city of Mostar suffered a setback yesterday when separatist Bosnian Croats boycotted the first meeting of the city council.

The boycott augurs poorly for Bosnia's first post-war national elections on 14 September, which international observers fear may entrench Bosnia's ethnic divisions rather than reunite the country.

Mostar is split into a Croat-controlled western sector of about 45,000 people, and a Muslim-controlled east of about 55,000, following a savage war between Muslims and Croats in 1993 and early 1994, when both were nominal allies against the Bosnian Serbs.

On account of the Croat boycott, Muslim members of Mostar's council decided yesterday to postpone the selection of a mayor and deputy mayor for the city. But they elected a council president, Hamdija Jahic, who is the local leader of the Muslim-led Party of Democratic Action (SDA).

"As you see, the [Croat] representatives are not here, but I hope that they will take part in our next session," Mr Jahic told council members.

The Croats defended their boycott on the grounds that the municipal elections of 30 June, which produced a narrow victory for their Muslim political rivals, had been marred by irregularities in votes cast abroad by Muslim refugees. The Croats also argued that the European Union, which has had a mandate since July 1994 to reunite Mostar, had overstepped its responsibilities by publishing the election results and declaring the poll fair.

However, Bosnian Muslim leaders contended that the true purpose of the Croat boycott was to keep alive the possibility that Mostar would one day become the capital of a Bosnian Croat state, or even be absorbed into Croatia. In a letter to the Irish presidency of the EU, Bosnia's Muslim President, Alija Izetbegovic, condemned the boycott as "blocking the entire process of democratically overcoming the Mostar crisis, and creating a



dangerous precedent for the September elections".

Under last year's Dayton peace settlement, Muslims and Croats are united in a federation that occupies 51 per cent of Bosnia, whereas 49 per cent is under Bosnian Serb control. But tensions and suspicions have plagued the Muslim-Croat relationship since the 1993-94 war, and international observers say the Dayton settlement may collapse if efforts to reunite Mostar are unsuccessful.

The municipal elections gave 28,165 votes to the SDA and its

coalition partners, and 26,464 votes to the nationalist, Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). In practice, this means Muslims and their allies will have a one-vote majority on the city council, should the Croats change their minds and take their seats.

From a Muslim viewpoint, the Croats have never been genuinely committed to reuniting Mostar. Recently the Croat mayor of western Mostar, Mijo Brakjovic, said that just as the Muslims possessed Sarajevo and the Bosnian Serbs had the northern city of Banja Luka, so the Croats should have Mostar.

Nationalist Croats from western Herzegovina regard Mostar as the capital of the self-proclaimed Croat mini-state of Herzeg-Bosnia, which has survived, partly thanks to support from Croatia.

In an interview in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* last year, President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia said: "The Muslims wanted to reign over the whole of Mostar then gain ground to the sea, and finally create an Islamic state. That is what our Croats are defending themselves against."

## Czechs at odds over return of Church land

ADRIAN BRIDGE  
Central Europe Correspondent

Plans to return more than 430,000 acres of confiscated land to the Czech Republic's Catholic Church remained a serious bone of contention yesterday as parliamentarians gathered for a debate leading to a vote of confidence in the centre-right government of the Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus.

Under the terms of the plan, which marks the second main stage of property restitution, the church is set to receive all the forest estates and some 500 buildings that were taken from it following the Communist takeover of power in 1948.

"The crimes of Communism [are finally] being put right," Cardinal Miloslav Vlk, the leader of the Czech Catholic Church said, when the plan was announced.

But many Czechs have denounced the idea as a throwback to feudalism and an illegitimate squandering of valuable national resources.

"It would be more advantageous for all of us if our sick forests have an owner who specialises in the care of forests, not in the care of the human soul," complained Vaclav Belohradsky in the daily *Lidove Noviny*.

Other critics say that many of the Catholic Church estates were themselves confiscated from the Protestant Church during the 30 years' war in the 17th century.

Given the controversy surrounding the issue, Czech politicians have to date tried to avoid it. But the picture changed this summer when a general election resulted in the governing three-party coalition narrowly losing its overall majority. As a price for the continued support of the Christian Democrats, Mr Klaus agreed to make the restoration of church land a key plank of the government's programme.

That, however, made him vulnerable in the vote of confidence - expected either today or tomorrow - in which he is dependent on the tacit support of the opposition Social Democrats, all of whom are against the return of church land.



# Air alert: Fears over sales to the 'enemy'

## US fighters are armed to meet the 'Gray Threat'

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

The US Air Force is preparing to meet the "Gray Threat". Not the "Greys" - or "Greys" - of the X-Files, the mekon-like extraterrestrials with the almond-shaped eyes. No, the "Gray Threat" comes from Britain, France and Sweden. Or so says the Rand Corporation, the US think tank which advises the Pentagon and the State Department.

The "Gray Threat" is posed by nations who produce aircraft which they may sell to people whom the Americans (the guys in white hats on white horses) may end up fighting. Not the "Black Threat" - the former Soviet Union - but the "Greys" in between: the Europeans, who will shortly be providing better ones.

The study, subtitled "assessing the next generation European fighters", was funded by the US Air Force and reviewed by two academics to ensure impartiality. It appears as a justification for continued development of the new US fighter, the F-22.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union serious questions have been raised about the continuing need for highly capable and expensive weapon systems conceived at the height of the Cold War, it says. Existing US aircraft are probably well able to cope with current and future Russian systems. But what, asks the report, if Third World countries were able to buy new European aircraft which "will have significant speed, stealth and

manoeuvrability improvements over current types and are actively being marketed worldwide".

Sceptics would argue this is an extreme manifestation of the military-industrial complex. Without a Soviet threat to justify top-of-the-range weapon systems, the US is using European aircraft - which are designed to beat Russian aircraft - to justify them instead. "The new European fighters employ a considerable amount of cutting-edge aerospace technology and are likely to be equipped with an impressive array of subsystems and advanced components," it says.

Top of the list is the Eurofighter 2000, the aircraft which is expected to perform almost as well as the top-of-the-range US F-22 in air-to-air combat and is also a bomber. Below Eurofighter, and comparable in performance with the latest Russian Su-35 air-to-air fighter, come the French Rafale and the Swedish Gripen.

But the Europeans are expected to provide better after-sales service and that, the report says, may make them more attractive to Third-World dictators whom the US may end up fighting.

The study does not suggest that current US planes would be outclassed by Eurofighters in Third World hands. However, "US forces might be confronted with a rough parity in exchange ratios" - one US plane lost to one Eurofighter, rather than three to one, an unacceptable ratio.

But the study probably has more to do with the fiercely competitive market for international defence sales than any future war. Few examples cited are of countries which the US would expect to face in conflict: instead, they are places where Europe and the US are fighting for markets.

Chile, for example, "may be indicative of the type of environment the United States may have increasingly to cope with", the study says. Saab has already opened a sales office in Santiago, but the US is facing problems selling its F-16s there to replace Chile's ageing fleet of British Hawker Hunters.



Taste of the army: A Russian volunteer enjoys grilled grasshopper at pre-military training summer camp near Timonino

Photograph: AP

### The European strikeforce



#### EUROFIGHTER 2000

After a shaky start, the first Eurofighter 2000s, built by Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain, are expected to be in service by 2001. They should be available for export by 2005. Eurofighter has now flown 200 hours and performed exactly as the computers predicted it would.

Described by its chief test pilot last week as "the best handling, high performance aeroplane that any of us have ever flown", the Eurofighter is supremely agile. With a maximum speed of twice the speed of sound (1,400 mph) and 13 weapons-carrying points, it is a true multi-role aircraft designed as a fighter.

which can also act as a bomber.

British Aerospace, the UK prime contractor, claims Eurofighter will win four out of five encounters with the top-of-the-range Russian fighter, the Su-35, second only to the US F-22, advanced stealth fighter, which will win in nine out of 10. More modest appraisals by the Defence Research Agency, to which the Rand Corporation lends credence, confirm the figure for F-22 but give Eurofighter three wins out of four.

But F-22 is estimated to cost twice as much, and lacks Eurofighter's ability to launch air-to-ground attacks, making the European aircraft the second best future fighter and the best value for money in the world.



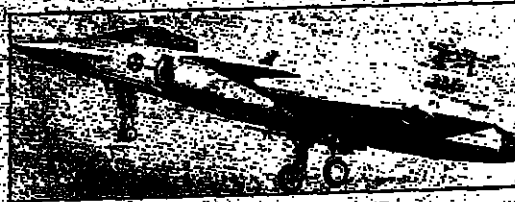
#### GRIPEN

Considerably smaller than the Eurofighter 2000 or Rafale, with 11 weapons stations, the Saab Gripen is a single-seat multi-role aircraft able to take off in a relatively short distance and which has also sparked interest from Norway and Saudi Arabia.

Like the other two, it is the canard-delta, a combination of "canards" - forward fins, and a delta wing, which give the greatest manoeuvrability at supersonic speeds. The oldest of the three designs, it has had problems in development two

Gripens have crashed. Saab claims it has now eliminated the problems with changes in the computer software. The Gripen weighs about seven tonnes empty, compared with 10 for Eurofighter, and weighs 28,000lb fully loaded, against 46,000lb for Eurofighter.

The Defence Research Agency gives it an effectiveness index of 0.4 - below existing aircraft types like F-16 and F-18. But Gripen is the cheapest of the three fighters, costing about \$25m (£16m) each, compared with \$58m for the Rafale and a similar amount for the Eurofighter.



#### RAFALE (SQUALL)

Roughly similar to the EF-2000 in size, weight and weapons load, the Dassault Rafale is a single-seat, multi-role fighter which France will deploy from land bases and aircraft carriers.

The carrier version is lighter than the land-based aircraft, but 80 per cent of its structure is identical. Like Eurofighter, Rafale has been of interest to Norway, and could also attract countries such as the United Arab Emirates, which want to replace French

Mirages. Like Eurofighter, it has a canard-delta combination. It is also described as "stealthy" - but is less so than new US designs.

Unlike the EF-2000, which uses all-composite wings, Rafale is of more conservative design, with a metal skeleton under its carbon-fibre skin. It has 14 weapons-carrying points, and is able to carry 18,000lb of ordnance.

British Aerospace rates Rafale as equal to the Su-35 in air-to-air combat. It has an "effectiveness index" of 0.55, below some existing F-15s but above others.

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# Jokers have last laugh on Dole



Raise a smile: Bob Dole prompts more jokes than Bill Clinton, who is ahead in the opinion polls by 20 percentage points

Photograph: AP

Washington — Bill Clinton and Bob Dole will soon be unveiling their television advertisements for this year's presidential elections but, try as each may to portray himself in a solemn light, they will battle to overcome the caricature perceptions fixed in the voters' minds by the jokes on America's popular late-night television shows.

Hardly a night goes by without David Letterman, Jay Leno or Conan O'Brien — television hosts who enjoy almost as much name recognition as the two candidates — venturing a wisecrack about Mr Clinton or Mr Dole. Clinton jokes depict the President as a womaniser, or a junk food glutton, or both. Dole jokes present the challenger, who turned 73 on Monday, as testy, wooden, and ancient.

A Swiss company has announced that it is now making 100 per cent safe breast implants

The US presidential candidates are a rich source of humour for TV show hosts, writes John Carlin

made from vegetable oil," began Leno of NBC. "That is going to take a lot of will power for Clinton to pass up, don't you think? I mean, a woman with large breasts who smells like a French fry?"

Leno managed there to wrap the Clinton stereotypes into one. Letterman — Leno's rival on CBS — hit upon a clumsier formula to do the same to Mr Dole. Included in Letterman's list of the "Top Ten Highlights" of Mr Dole's recent appearance on CNN's *Larry King Live* were: "Bob pulled out his teeth and made them chatter on Larry's desk"; "Bob kept snapping Larry's suspenders and barking, 'Say awake, punk!'"; "While attempting to smile Bob sprained his face."

Funny or not, there is no doubting the impact television humour will have on an election whose outcome, given the candidates' failure so far to demarcate clear positions on the issues, is expected to depend on the "character" question. According to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 25 per cent of American adults, and 40 per cent of those under 30, said that television humour would influence their electoral choices.

So far Mr Clinton is way ahead of Mr Dole in the opinion polls. A poll published yesterday by *USA Today* merely confirmed the findings of three polls last week, that Mr Clinton is a clear 20 percentage points ahead. In terms of the humour index, this would suggest that the people polled are more comfortable with the idea of a likeable young bumbler in the White House than with a venerable old bumbler.

Also acting against Mr Dole — and this may change as the campaign wears on — is the fact that most of the Clinton jokes have been done before whereas, the Kansas senator being newer on the presidential scene, Dole jokes provide a richer vein for the humourists to tap.

Worst of all for Mr Dole, in

a country where winning is everything and voters do not like to be associated with a loser, more and more jokes are beginning to appear that make fun of his plummeting ratings.

Mr Clinton is laughing now. But the tide may turn, especially if more White House scandals emerge of the type that prompted this Letterman joke in his "Top ten surprises in the OJ Simpson video: number five: the revelation that the gloves are Hillary's size."

## I say, I say...

Letterman, CBS: "A Japanese inventor has developed a robot that can simulate five human facial expressions. Now, I know you're saying to yourself, 'that's three more than Bob Dole can make'."

Conan O'Brien, NBC: "I don't know how we got hold of this... written by the psychiatrist who treats Bob Dole. Take a look at this note. It says, 'Earliest childhood memory: father carried away by pterodactyl'."

Letterman, again, on Mr Dole's *Larry King* performance: "The show was apparently a huge success. Everything went great for him. It was so successful, in fact, Dole only dropped eight points in the polls."

Whatever new directions the television jokes take, one thing for sure is that they will continue to proliferate all the way up to polling day on 5 November. They are likely to have at least as much influence as the state of the economy and US foreign relations in determining who will lead the world's most powerful nation into the next century.

## Burmese junta comes in from the cold

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY  
Jakarta

"It's hard to find an equivalent," said the European official at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) yesterday, "but try to imagine... the European Union taking on Libya as a member. Even Radovan Karadzic had to step down — but here they are, welcoming Burma."

The official documents made little mention of it (the chairman's closing statement acknowledged nothing more than "some divergence of views on the subjects discussed"). But the third ARF meeting in Jakarta yesterday was dominated by discussion of Burma, and the future of its military junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The host country, Indonesia, seems to have been hoping to avoid the subject altogether. The Western representatives, led by the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, insisted, and the result was an uneasy stand-off which leaves it unclear whether the SLORC has gained or lost from its controversial presence in Jakarta this week.

The seven members of the Association of South-East Asian States (ASEAN) appear to be sharply divided from their Western partners on the question of Burma. ASEAN favours what it calls "constructive engagement" with Rangoon, and this week received Burma as an observer member. Non-Asian members of ARF, including the EU, US and Australia, have criticised this approach, especially since last month, when an honorary consul for several Scandinavian countries died in custody in Rangoon.

Even in public, the façade of harmony among the partners has been strained. "The countries of the West want multi-party democracy," said Ali Alatas, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, and chair of the Forum, "but all the countries of the world want to encourage democratisation... Don't dictate to us that only a Westminster-style system of government is ac-

ceptable, or only an American system is acceptable. That is intellectual arrogance."

Matters came to a head at an informal dinner for ARF participants on Monday night. The Burmese were not present, and Warren Christopher persuaded Mr Alatas to take the subject at the following day's conference. In the presence of the Burmese Foreign Minister, Ohn Gyaaw, "it was definitely a humiliation," said a European official. "He had to sit there while his host conveyed criticisms of his country's human rights record and internal policies."

According to American and European diplomats, ASEAN states may be less than delighted at Burma's admission to their ranks. Some, including the Philippines, with its own recent memory of overthrowing an oppressive regime, are embarrassed by Rangoon's record. The admission of an economy as feeble as Burma's also creates difficulties in applying uniform standards. But, with other poor members of the ARF — Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia — it acts as a crucial geographical buffer against China.

All of the ASEAN members have human rights problems, said the European official. "When they speak out against sanctions, and talk about different kinds of democracy, they are protecting themselves."

The danger lies in an East-West split within the ARF, especially if the SLORC does launch a crackdown against the democracy movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

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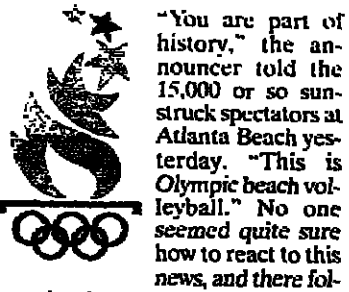
# THE INDEPENDENT

# Summer of sport

Wednesday 24 July 1996

## Sublime or ridiculous? Welcome to the Olympics of the absurd

Beach volleyball day one:  
**Mike Rowbottom** sees a new sport make its debut



followed a short excerpt from Johnny B Goode.

Like rock and roll music, beach volleyball has been gathered into the embrace of the Establishment. The sport which originated on the beaches of California in the 1930s, and which boomed as a fun pursuit for a generation of camper van-inhabiting hippies in the 1960s, has now given itself over to the International Olympic Committee.

But if it has lost something through that, those present at this man-made beach 300 miles from any ocean seemed more than happy about the counterbalancing gains.

The modern Olympics has included and discarded many odd activities in its 100-year span: sports like the 14lb stone throw, the standing triple jump and even, intriguingly, the javelin (both hands).

How long beach volleyball – which has been described as Baywatch with rules – will remain within the Olympic realm is open to question. But, given their beach culture, the Australians are hardly likely to refuse it space in the 2,000 Sydney Games. And the Americans are certainly enjoying it.

Beach volleyball's inclusion in the Olympics has everything to do with its popularity in the United States, as reflected, inevitably, in television ratings. The most recent figures available from the host broadcasters, NBC, assign domestic showings of beach volleyball a rating of 2.0, with one point representing 959,000 homes. Given that the sacred sport of basketball rates 5.3, beach volleyball is not surprisingly described by an NBC spokesman as "a regular staple of our coverage".

And just to make sure that the host nation was thoroughly happy with the arrangements, an extra team place was allocated to them in their capacity as host nation.

Gail Castro, one of the six US women competing yesterday, underlined the point. "TV was where we made our big jump in this event," she said. "Once we got TV, the big sponsors wanted to come in and... well," she concluded with a grin, "money."

Money. Most of the teams here had it. The top players in the women's game, US and Brazilian, can earn between \$300,000 and \$500,000 a year. The Americans, Brazilians, Dutch, German are all professional. Which leaves the Brits. Encouraged by a group of friends and relatives holding the charmingly restrained banner "Go! Go! And Mol!", Britain's pairing of Amanda Glover, a 26-year-old supervisor at the Britanic Leisure Centre in Hackney, and 31-year-old Audrey

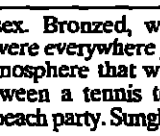


Baywatch with rules: Norway's beach volleyball team face up to the United States in 110F heat at Atlanta Beach yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown



**Michelle Smith: from obscurity to Olympic glory** Page 3  
**British hopes unsaddled in the three-day event** Page 3  
**Complete form guide to the athletics events** Pages 6 & 7



**STRANGE OLYMPIC SPORTS - PAST AND PRESENT**  
**The past**  
**ROQUE:** A variation of croquet, played on a hard-surfaced court with a raised border that can be used for bank shots. Only ever included in the 1904 Games, with all competitors from the United States.  
**TUG OF WAR:** The first team to pull the other team six feet was declared the winner. In 1900, the US team took part in a 'friendly' tug, which broke up when American spectators decided to join in.  
**KORFBALL:** A game similar to basketball which appeared in the 1920 Games. Played by teams comprising six men and six women, korfbal is particularly popular in the Netherlands and Germany.  
**STONE THROW:** Held in the 1906 Games in Athens, where the American favourite, James Mitchell, was unable to compete due to a dislocated shoulder sustained when the US team's ship was hit by a large wave.  
**PELOTA:** Also known as jai alai; originated from the Basque region of Spain. Played with a basket strapped to the hand, with the aim of not allowing the other player to return the ball. Demo sport in 1924 Olympics and also appeared in Mexico games.  
**RACQUETS:** Similar to real tennis, featured only in the 1906 Games, where Britain gained all three medals in the doubles event.

ined sandcastles and invariably touching hands between points, win or lose, as if for reassurance.

With far fewer people than an indoor volleyball team, the sense of mutual dependency in this sport is exaggerated. Curiously, however, two of the medal favourites – the top US pair of Nancy Reno and Holly McPeak, and the Brazilian world champions Jackie Silva and Sandra Pires – have been given by arguments in recent weeks. Reno, a staunch feminist, reportedly objected to her partner having a breast enlargement operation, and had to be persuaded not to break up the pairing.

**The present**  
**RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS:** Hoops, hoopla ribbons and music. But a sport?  
**SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING:** More music, which appears to accompany a competition for fixed smiles among teenage girls.

For all the divergence in financial resources evident here, what players have in common was also glaringly obvious – the heat of the sun, which yesterday raised temperatures on court into the 100s. The lingering problem of sand, too, is something held in common. "Three months after a tournament you can still find sand coming out of your ears," Castro said. "It's the weirdest thing."

The audience response to all this sweaty activity yielded some interesting international variation. The British clapped dourly, the Americans whistled, and the Brazilians, led by a trumpeter and a man with huge green and yellow gloves, chanted to a sequence of beguiling rhythms. Meanwhile, behind the stands, America's holy trinity of Coke, McDonalds and Budweiser did their steady business.

Whether it accorded with the spirit of the Olympics – who knows. The spirit of the place, at any rate, was summed up in a uniquely Californian way by one of the US team, Barbara Fontana Harris. "I think," she said, "that the energy in the air is just more celebration and a more powerful definition of locality. And that's great."

Which, in a way, said it all.

Tennis day one:  
**Norman Fox** sees the world of Agassi and Nike in an unlikely setting

The taking part more important than the winning? As John McEnroe famously remarked: "You cannot be serious."

The Olympic tennis tournament got under way yesterday and Andre Agassi is in no doubt where his priorities lie. "I always wanted to compete in the Olympics," he said. "This is as big as any grand slam tournament, except I don't get paid."

Not much anyway. Agassi's Nike contract is a moveable feast which keeps adding to his \$150m fortune, no matter how badly he plays.

While Agassi may not have entered into the spirit of things by staying in the Olympic village – a luxury hotel is more his style – others from the multi-million dollar world of tennis have taken a different attitude.

Monica Seles is "slumming" it in the village and loving every minute of it. She said: "I've been getting excited about being here for almost two years. I wanted to stay in the village to get the full Olympic experience."

As she was talking, other competitors were taking her picture. She promptly found her own camera and took pictures of them. She has holed up with Lindsay Davenport and Chanda Rubin, and two members of the American water polo team.

"I'd never met them until the opening ceremony," she said. "You just get talking to everyone here. After the ceremony the three of us went out into the town and sat drinking coffee until 3am."

Agassi said that one of the main reasons he wanted to compete in the Games was because his father, Mike, boxed for Iran in the Olympics of 1948 and 1952. "He's prouder of me for coming here than any other thing I've done so far," Agassi said. He staunchly defends the right of tennis to be an Olympic sport.

"There's plenty of people here who are real amateurs, but look at the Dream Team – look at the top athletes. Everything has changed." Even so, letting millionaires into the Games has still driven the whole Olympic ethic way beyond the baseline.

Tennis, however, could be said to have more of an historical right to be in the Games than, say, beach volleyball or mountain biking. After all, it was in the 1896 Olympics in Athens, though hardly seriously: a passing British tourist, John Pius Boland, heard about it by chance and entered. He won the gold medal.

Tennis came back into the Olympic movement only eight years ago with massive criticism about its ultra-professionalism. The argument might have rung true 30 years before, but not after several decades of phoney amateurism, particularly in athletics.

The IOC welcomed tennis for commercial reasons and were delighted when Goran Ivanisevic and Stefan Edberg were their country's flag bearers in Barcelona. Whether the Olympics has sold its soul is of little interest to Agassi, but with a number of the big names having pulled out before the Games had begun, he has found himself a comparatively lonely flag-bearer for his sport here.

Henman wins, page 3



*'I even heard it alleged, by a Pakistani player, that it wasn't unusual for all the umpires to be rounded up before a home series and coerced into giving Pakistan favourable decisions'*  
**DEREK PRINGLE** explains the special tension when England play Pakistan at Test cricket – Page 4

## Britain's swimmers cross Atlantic in 8 hours 55 minutes.

The British Olympic team flew to Atlanta with Delta Air Lines. But then, we do have more flights there than anyone else. **Delta Air Lines**



# 2 Olympic games



## Haining's game of patience

Peter Haining, the best lightweight single sculler the world has seen, took another step along the road to his target of a medal as a heavyweight in the 2000 Olympics, by qualifying for the semi-finals at Gainesville yesterday.

Haining had been relegated to the repechage system in the heats, but had shown his mettle by chasing all the way even when his cause was lost. Yesterday the last thing his coach, Miles Thompson, told him was: "It's a thinking man's race. Don't forget to think." He was telling his light sculler that the head wind, which was brisk but straight, would tempt some scullers to go out too fast before running out of puff in the closing stages.

From the start Haining was determined to stay out of the lead and to use as little energy as possible to stay in touch with the second qualifying place. At 77kg he was able to vary his tactics feeling strong enough to leave his push to the finish of the race instead of "scuttling" off at the start and trying to hang on.

Haining shadowed Australia's David Cameron, who at 22 is 12 years his junior, and waited for him to weaken. About 500m from the finish Haining took his chance. "I saw his back lose its shape and turn into a C and with a fifteen-stroke burst I was ahead," Haining burst.



By Hugh Matheson

Haining finished four seconds behind the reigning world champion, Istok Cop, from Slovenia.

Guin Batten also took her place in the single sculls semi-final with a solid show to take third place in the repechage. She was led briefly by the German Melke Evers, but when the 19-year-old junior world champion showed her inexperience at this level, Batten was decisive and took third place.

The men's double scull raced for the second time with Guy Pooley, the spare man, after Jim Cracknell was ruled out by the team doctor, Ann Redgrave, with a throat infection. This time Pooley was in the bow seat with Bobby Thatcher at stroke and for over 1,000m it looked like they might still qualify for the semi-final. But their lack of practice eventually proved too much in the second half of the race.

The women's pair of Kate Mackenzie and Philippa Cross had to beat one crew to make the last 12 and they did it with something to spare. However, they will have to find a lot more pace in the middle 1,000 metres if they are to reach the final on Thursday.



Britain's Chris Mayes makes a break during the 2-2 draw with the Dutch yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

## Giles cameo keeps Britain in the hunt

Great Britain Netherlands 2 2

Great Britain's ingenious exploitation of a loophole in the new rule that allows "rolling" substitutions came to their rescue again yesterday when Calum Giles popped on to the field for a minute or two, just long enough to flick in a late equalising goal from a short penalty.

The use of Giles's skill simply to score at short penalties is infuriating opponents and there is every chance that after the Games the laws will be changed to ban such brief but effective interventions. Without his goal yesterday, though, Britain would be highly unlikely to secure a semi-final place. As it is, after two draws they still have a struggle to come, especially with Australia.

After 17 minutes yesterday Floris Jan Bovelander scored following a penalty corner but in the 27th minute Jason Lee was moving quickly into a dangerous scoring situation when Erik Jazet cut across him. As the ball went beyond Lee's control, Jensen



By Norman Fox

bundled him down, but by then Jazet had already been penalised for stick obstruction and Russell Garcia flicked the penalty over Jensen for the equaliser.

Tenacity rather than skill had kept Britain in contention but after an hour a bizarre incident in which Simon Singh inadvertently and painfully deflected a shot from Taco van den Honert into goal off his head resulted not in the goal being given straight away but a penalty award. While Singh was still reaching Marcellus Delissen scored. But soon after, as John Shaw was trying to get the ball across the face of the Dutch goal, it struck Jazet's foot resulting in

a penalty corner. Jon Wyatt took it, Simon Hazlett stopped the ball and Giles succeeded with yet another long, powerful flick.

In the women's competition the defending champions Spain can virtually say goodbye to any hopes they had of retaining their title following their 1-0 defeat yesterday at the hands of Argentina. At the top, the Australians, with a 1-0 win against Germany, moved two points clear of the field.

Great Britain's 1-0 win over the Netherlands moved them to 1-1, while the Dutch moved to 1-1. The Netherlands moved to 1-1, while the Dutch moved to 1-1.

## YESTERDAY IN ATLANTA

### Christie tipped for 100m by Fredericks

#### Athletics

Lindford Christie received a vote of confidence from the man he must beat to retain the Olympic 100 metres title on Saturday.

Frankie Fredericks, his training partner, believes Christie is in shape for a vigorous defence of the crown he claimed in Barcelona four years ago. The 28-year-old Namibian declared: "If I don't win, I hope Lindford does."

Fredericks confirmed for the first time he would run the 100m as well as the 200m, but the announcement came as no surprise. He is the fastest man in the world this year, having twice come within a whisker of

the world record with times of 9.86sec and 9.57sec.

Christie has yet to run under 10 seconds this season, but Fredericks maintained: "He is in good shape and has the mental strength. He will be ready."

"If I don't win the 100m I hope Lindford does, and I'm sure he feels the same way about me. That is the kind of relationship we have. We both know how much we have given in training."

"I would be stupid just to run the 200m here. But the most important thing is I maintain my friendship with Lindford. Athletics come and go. I want to know that if I come to London in 10 years time he will still be my friend."

### Netherlands flatten Russia

#### Volleyball

The Netherlands, runners up in Barcelona four years ago, signalled their intentions of going one better at these Olympics as they came back from 7-3 down in the first set to overpower Russia 15-9, 15-9, 15-9 in the men's competition.

Seemingly outplayed in the early stages by Russia's well-organised defence, the Dutch gained control of their Group B game with their more subtle play. They surrendered only three points in a set that earned them the first set in 38 minutes, and then a 6-1 lead in the second, and were never in trouble after that. With nine of their 12 spikers being over 6ft 6in, the Dutch had the height to block and counter-attack.

It was the Netherlands' second straight victory, after 3-0 wins over Venezuela.

### Featherweight is thrown out

#### Boxing

Controversy never seems to be far away from the Olympic boxing competition and yesterday proved no exception as a competitor and a referee were both sent home from Hungary's János Nagy.

The Barbadian featherweight, John Kelson, got his marching orders after angrily throwing a glove when stopped in the third round by Nagy's János Nagy. He has also been banned from amateur boxing for a year.

The International Amateur Boxing Association president, Anwar Chowdhury, also ruled that a Russian referee had been suspended for poor officiating and would play no further part in the Olympics.

Chowdhury did not identify the suspended referee but said he had been guilty of poor judging. "In one day he made many mistakes. We could not tolerate it," said the official.

## Angolan improvement

#### Basketball

At Barcelona four years ago, Charles Barkley despised the image of the Dream Team when he viciously eluded an Argentine player in the ribs.

Barkley, still unrepentant about the incident, was on court again on Monday's return of the same fixture, with the United States taking on the Angolans once more.

In 1992 the US won 116-48. On Monday Angola cut the margin to 87-54 and Barkley was quick to pay tribute to the African team's improvement.

"The edge is gone," he said. Asked if he had buried the hatchet, Barkley replied: "It wasn't a big deal what I did. They didn't think so, they came up to me after the game." Maybe not. But the Angolans still remembered. "We felt we could not play physical and with real aggression," because of the "Barkley thing," Angola's coach said.

Washington DC is quickly becoming the centre of footballing upsets at the Olympic Games. For the third time in two days, the Robert F Kennedy Stadium saw a shock, with Portugal withstanding an Argentine onslaught to earn a 1-1 draw.

The result, before a crowd of 25,811, followed the Brazilian women's 1-1 draw with the world champions, Norway, and South Korea's 1-0 upset of the 1992 bronze medallists, Ghana, on Sunday.

Portugal earned the point when their forward, Nuno Gomez, slid in front of the defender Roberto Ayala to poke in a rebound in the 70th minute.

The draw left Portugal needing only a draw against the United States today at the same venue to advance to the second round. Argentina face Tunisia today also needing only a draw to advance.

Argentina, who missed numerous chances to score as well as hitting a post, got their only goal through Ariel Ortega's 18-yard chip that was deflected into the top left-hand corner in first-half injury time.

"It is difficult to give an explanation to the players when they tie this game because they clearly deserved to win and we end up getting only one point instead of three," Daniel Passarella, the Argentine coach who lifted the World Cup in 1978, said.

In other games yesterday Spain and France drew 1-1 in Orlando, the United States beat Tunisia 2-0 in Birmingham, Alabama, and Australia defeated Saudi Arabia 2-1 in Miami.

### Temper on a knife edge

#### Fencing

The Frenchman Philippe Omnes and his Cuban opponent, Elvis Gregory, had to be separated by police and security men when they "crossed swords" off the duelling piste after the Cuban was removed from the foil tournament.

Gregory, the world and Olympic bronze medalist and one of the favourites, threw down his weapon in disgust, kicked out at a wall and refused to shake hands after losing 15-14 to the Frenchman in a hotly-contested third-round bout.

### Security is skin tight

#### Sailing

So frustrated that one of the sailing Press became when activating the super-sensitive metal security alarm through which everyone has to pass before entering the Olympic Regatta Centre at Savannah that to the Southern Shores of the normally tough-as-nail security ladies, he stripped off. He went through naked and the alarm went off again. The system being what the system is, he then had to be scanned by one of the hand wands. That remained calm, he recollected. He was allowed in.

## TODAY'S TIMETABLE

All times listed are BST.

**Today**

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# Smith's perfect riposte

Guy Hodgson on American attempts to discredit another superb display from a popular Irish swimmer

If you had asked beforehand who would become a figure of rampant conjecture in the opening week of the Olympics, not many people would have plumped for a 26-year-old Irish woman. A Chinese girl, maybe, or perhaps a weightlifter sent home for steroid abuse, but a red-haired unknown from just outside Dublin?

By even the hassle-strewn, temper-testing standards of the Atlanta Games, Monday was an extraordinary day in the life of a hitherto nobody. At 3am Irish officials were still arguing Michelle Smith's rights to swim in the 400 metres freestyle, 17 hours later she had won her second gold medal in three days.

In between Janet Evans, an American icon so unsullied she had been chosen to carry the Olympic torch in the opening ceremony, had hung in a verbal hand-grenade. Was Smith on drugs? "If you're asking me the accusations out there," the four-times gold medalist had replied, "I would say yes they are."

Coming on top of the Americans' attempt to have Smith excluded because of a mix-up in entry time dates originating in Atlanta, the furor propelled Ireland's latest sporting heroine to the top of the Olympic agenda.

It left Smith bemused but calm. Indeed, in the press conference after the freestyle, she gave a near faultless performance and many doubters were swung over by her simple plea of innocence. "I put my heart and soul into this," she pleaded. "All I do is eat, sleep and train and this is the culmination of it all. It's the result of hard work, that's all."

It was evident where the chasm in belief lay. The Americans, long since scotchers of fairy stories, looked at Smith's improvement from an also-ran in Barcelona to a champion and were sceptical. Most of the rest of the world, perhaps spurred by a chance to get back at the hosts for a chaotic Games, lined up on the other side.

One Australian journalist described the American attitude as "ungracious" and the Canadian assistant coach, Deryk Snelling, who has worked with Smith, warned: "I've never seen a tougher girl. I'd be very careful about saying she's doing anything illegal." The Irish, meanwhile, are furious that she is being questioned.

Smith's father, Brian, said he was disgusted about what Evans had said about his daughter. "I looked up to her," he said. "I thought she was one of America's national treas-

**Hidden Personality**  
Business ventures have not been huge hits. She once made £30,000 out of someone else's risk-taking, taking a newspaper to court over allegations she stole another woman's husband.



Perfect timing: Michelle Smith celebrates her second gold medal after Monday's 400 metres freestyle race

Photograph: John Giles/PA

ures. To lower herself in that manner is beneath her as a gold medalist."

At least the consensus-splitting subject of the controversy stayed above the simmering arguments, merely saying that she had been disappointed by Evans's comments. "To my fellow competitors in Europe my success is not a surprise," Smith commented. "They've seen my improvement."

In the freestyle final Smith was aware the Americans had attempted to have her excluded, but the drugs comments had

been kept away from her. Unfettered by this latter worry, her race was a commanding one. She took the lead half-way through and never looked likely to be caught. Her time, 2min 07.25sec, was the fastest in the world this year.

"In the Olympics," she said, "there's supposed to be a spirit of fair play and I don't think it's playing fair if you are trying to disqualify a competitor. When it comes down to it I'm a fighter. If people put obstacles in my way it just makes me more determined."

"One of the things that makes me very proud is that Ireland hasn't a tradition in swimming. We also don't have great facilities, we don't have a 50-metre pool. To make it to this level I had to overcome things. I had to move to Holland, I had to make sacrifices."

Asked about the questions about drugs, she pointed out she had been tested four times in May and June alone, including once when she was leaving a television studio in Ireland after giving an interview. "My an-

swer is: look at my drug test," she said.

"I think it would be really stupid of me to take drugs. When you're in the top 20 you're subject to testing at any time. I was sitting at home at 9 o'clock one Sunday morning when the Fina people [from swimming's governing body] came to my house looking for a urine sample. You're not going to be that stupid."

Just once Smith's serenity faltered and that followed a question about her husband, Eric de Bruin, a Dutch discus thrower,

and his ban for taking steroids. "I just want to talk about my swimming," she said, her face hardening. The change, the edge in her voice, endorsed her previous easy denials rather than undermined them.

She should worry. Smith needed only to look at NBC's prime-time television coverage to see she had landed the perfect retort. Surrounding her race on Monday night there were advertisements for a truck endorsed by a person who had missed out on the final. That person was Janet Evans.

## Lots of legwork: how Michelle shocked the world

Irish swimming insiders were yesterday emphatic in rejecting American suggestions that Michelle Smith's emergence as an Olympic champion was either sudden or unnatural for a woman of 26 - well above the average age of Atlanta finalists.

Instead, in Ireland the Atlanta innuendoes were being derided as inevitable recriminations from a country unable to accept that its own star Janet Evans had been convincingly killed off by the ultra-determined Smith's fitness and superior technique.

Chalkie White, the former national swimming champion and sports writer, yesterday countered the argument that Smith could not have notched up an 18-second improvement on 1992 times in her 400-metre individual medley on Saturday by normal methods.

He pointed out that Smith had gone to the Barcelona Olympics hampered by an injury sustained training in Florida. Her times that year, it was also noted, were poorer because of the onset of glandular fever. "She didn't get the chance to swim well in competition [then] and we didn't get to see what she could do," he said.

Irish commentators have been highlighting how from the mid-Eighties the dogged Smith had been steadily improving, knocking 10 seconds off her times in some events by 1990 in slow but gradual progress.

The key change came when her training regime was criticised in 1992 by Erik de Bruin, a Dutch shot-putter she met at a Barcelona social function. He subsequently became her coach, took her to the Netherlands to

Alan Murdoch explains why back home in Ireland Michelle Smith's success is attributed to hard work and improved technique

train - Ireland has no 50-metre pool - and last month also became her husband. He identified a critical weakness: spending too long on long-distance swimming that sapped strength for later sprint exercises.

Using video analysis and tactical planning, he told her to learn from the way track and field athletes prepare. "They sat down and watched videos which identified her weak points," White said. "He identified muscle groups that controlled certain movements, and they then went to the gym and worked on weights and strengthened those muscles and got her fitter."

White said de Bruin restructured her entire schedule "and

made sure she did the right training at the right time."

Irish television yesterday used underwater film, analysed minutely by Gary O'Toole, a champion swimmer and qualified doctor, to demonstrate Smith's vastly superior technique to her 400-metre rivals. In particular she used a visibly quicker, more powerful leg action to speed propulsion, whereas other relied more heavily on arm power to lesser effect.

Diet and discipline were ruthlessly controlled. This meant little or no social life for two years as Smith headed for bed at 9pm nightly. From childhood she had been used to 5am starts. When the couple married

last month Smith went to the registrar's office from morning training and returned to the pool later that day. Such restraint, Smith points out, has already allowed track and marathon peak-performance ages to be lifted to the late twenties and early thirties.

While, like others in the Irish entourage, accepted Americans were bound to question Smith's improvement, but as the Irish champion herself stressed, this was in part inevitable because she has done little of her swimming in the United States. Her European credentials were confirmed unambiguously last year with European Championship successes in Vienna.

In Ireland, Smith's success is being widely celebrated as a long-overdue resurgence in women's sport. Mass euphoria has yet to touch Irish World Cup campaign levels, but tired heads and sore throats were yesterday being nursed in the The Point Still, in Smith's home village of Rathcoole, south of Dublin, where pandemonium has twice erupted as a crowd watched their local heroine.

Irish media attention has been huge with Smith's story splashed across seven pages on Monday in the two main Dublin daily papers, not least because no Irish woman athlete had ever won an Olympic medal before. Her golds - unexpectedly stealing the limelight from the runner Sonia O'Sullivan - were also the first Irish success at Atlanta by either a male or female competitor.

The breakthroughs by Smith and O'Sullivan are part of a wider Irish women's emancipation. In sport this has been nothing short of revolutionary. Irish women's athletics was in effect wiped out for over a decade by the Archbishop of Dublin. In 1949, with women's sport on the up after Fanny Blankers-Koen's inspirational victories in the Olympics, John Charles McQuaid, wrote a Lenten pastoral letter damning it as "unbecoming".

One of the foremost Irish-speaking celebrities, Smith promotes the language on radio ads and is sponsored at the Olympics by Bord na Gaeltog, a national cultural body. Irish is her first language: she attended Irish language primary and secondary schools, and came first in the country in the subject at the equivalent of A-level.

## Australia go clear as Britain slip up

The Australian three-day event team, riding with an impressive blend of dash and skill, galloped to a 61 points lead after the speed and endurance test yesterday.

Only sixth after the dressage, they overhauled the leaders, the United States, and left their rivals New Zealand in third followed by France and Ireland with the British team a disappointing sixth.

Britain's pathfinder, Ian Stark, was improving all the time on Stanwick Ghost when the grey missed his footing coming out of the first water. It was then impossible to jump the rails which followed and he put his feet in the ditch, pitching Stark over the fence. The pair continued so the team riders following could benefit from Stark's advice.

William Fox-Pitt, however, had an unfortunate refusal at the

**EQUESTRIANISM**  
By Mary Gordon Watson

awkward Indian Falls side bounce and later lost time when Cosmopolitan slipped up on the flat before the *Olympic Rings*. "The ground is soft on top from so much watering but hard underneath, making it slippery," he said. However he praised the research work which has allowed horses to start and finish phase D feeling fresh and ready. "It's probably better conditions than on a hot day in England."

Gary Parsonage justified his selection with a good steady clear round on Magic Rogue, and Karen Dixon followed with a more adventurous clear round, twice banking fences. "Luckily he's like a pony with 10 legs," she said. "I didn't take many risks as I was told to get round clear, so I had to abandon some original plans in favour of safety."

The heat fanned by a comforting breeze played only a small part in the action-packed day. It was their speed, fitness, courage and indomitable "go for it" attitude that won the day for the Australians.

Only the Frenchman Jacques Dulcy, on Upont, completed the testing course inside the minimum 10 minutes - a feat most riders said was impossible on such a twisting, hilly and slippery course. But three of the Australian team all proved faster than the rest, with their most experienced competitor, Andrew Hoy, on Darien Powers, the quickest.

## Henman scrapes through

**TENNIS**  
By Stuart Alexander

Tim Henman lifted the hearts of Britain's Olympic troops as he reached the second round of the men's singles yesterday.

Henman, Britain's first Wimbledon men's singles finalist since 1973, looked in real trouble during a tense and error-strewn first set against Japan's Shuzo Matsuoka at Stone Mountain.

The 300-plus Union Jack-waving British fans, desperate for something to cheer after three days to forget, watched anxiously as the 21-year-old Henman baked in the searing 100F heat and struggled to get his game together.

Drama became crisis when Henman's second serve on set point against him at 5-6 appeared to be out. It was called by the line judge, but he immediately corrected himself which meant Henman had first serve again.

And the Oxfordshire man, now at his best ever world ranking of No 37, took advantage to win the point and hold serve before taking the tie-break and 11 successive points at the start of the second set on his way to a 7-6 (7-4) 6-3 win in 1hr 22min.

The first set was crucial and, while I'm not saying it was the turning point, it was certainly a big one," Henman said.

## Sad Bell fails in final quest

**JUDO**  
By Philip Nickson

Diane Bell has won every major competition in a remarkable international career - including two world titles and three European titles - spanning nearly 15 years. But yesterday her career drew to a close without the Olympic medal she so wanted.

The 32-year-old, who won gold in Seoul when judo was only a demonstration sport, showed she was still among the best in winning a bronze medal at the European Championships in May. Certainly, on paper, she was in with a chance in Atlanta. But, as she said: "It wasn't to be."

Bell did not have any real difficulties against Australia's Lara Sullivan, though the Briton had to rely on a decision in a scoreless match. The second round

could have swung the match. In the closing seconds, it was the Spaniard who put the result beyond reach with a leg-grab for seven points.

Bell was outside the mat when Alvarez executed her winning throw. "I thought I'd got far enough off the mat, but obviously I hadn't and I relaxed. And the referee counted it," said Bell, who had to be comforted by her coach when she broke down in tears afterwards.

"It was hard to get back after that. I just didn't get into the fight. I was thinking about what I was going to do and doing it two or three seconds later. At this level you cannot do that. I think I might just have edged it if it hadn't been for the throw."

"When I beat her in May I

absolutely battered her. I threw her and strangled her. I don't know if I was over-confident going in there. Perhaps I was a bit too cagey and she took advantage of it."

With Alvarez being thrown and held by the Netherlands' Jenny Gal in the next round, Bell was out of the competition. "I have said that I will be available for the European team championships if I am required, but then I will think seriously if I will continue," Bell said.

In the men's light middleweight division, Graeme Randall, the 21-year-old from Edinburgh, was eliminated in the first round by Shay-Oren Smadja, of Israel, with a powerful footsweep.

where Andy Beardsworth, Barry Parkin and Adrian Stead took no chances. They were seventh at the end of the first leg and seventh at the finish. "Our race was fine," Stead said. "We were only ever on the fringes of the storm during the race, and that was on the first run. It was on the way home that we were hit by the heads of the storm."

Still, it was a good opener, a reasonable start, and something to build on.

The winner was America's Jeff Madrigal, who sailed extra distance looking for stronger wind under the cloud of the approaching storm. He found it and went from ninth to first. "It was a brave call," Stead said. "Not one we would have made."

The Canadian Ross Macdonald won the Star race only to be disqualified on a protest from the defending gold medalist, the American Mark Reynolds, that he had not been given proper room rounding a mark. That moved Torben Grael, of Brazil, up to No 1, and the 1992 silver medalist Rod Davis, of New Zealand, to second, and Reynolds up from fourth to third.

Spain's defending gold medalist, Jose-Maria van der Ploeg, came through strongly to win the Finn race from Yuri Toovy of the Ukraine and Michael Maier of the Czech Republic.

The forecast yesterday was for more of the same weather. The 470s are scheduled to begin racing today.

## British men fail to make a splash

GUY HODGSON

Britons have not exactly been making scorch marks in the Olympic pool this week but even in this underwhelming atmosphere the performance in the men's 100 metres backstroke would have had the national coaches tearing their hair out in Atlanta yesterday.

In Neil Willey and Martin Harris, Britain had the third and sixth fastest men in the world this year, yet those performances looked totally misleading when they failed to reach the final. Not by a small way either, but by a margin as big as the question mark over the team's preparation.

Willey, a silver medalist in the World Short Course Championships last year, finished a dismal fifth in his heat with a time of 56.27sec, more than a second slower than his personal best. Harris, the British record holder, was even worse with 57.17 and finished 26th overall.

"I don't know what was wrong," Willey said. "I wasn't ready mentally or physically. I will have to sit down with my coach and work it out." Asked about the build-up, he preferred to keep his counsel.

The male backstroke swimmers were not alone in their disappointment. Caroline Foot, at 31 the second oldest swimmer ever to compete for Britain at the Olympics, was more than a second outside her best with 1:03.04 in the 100m butterfly, while Marie Hardman finished sixth in her 200m breaststroke heat.

At least she could take home a rare consolation, a time faster than in the trials last March. At 2:31.12 she was marginally quicker and it earned her a place in the B final.

However, the air of gloom in putting Paul Palmer's efforts into a better light.

Yesterday, the 21-year-old from Lincoln made it to his third final of the Games when he was sixth fastest in the heats for the 400m freestyle.

Palmer was outside his own British record, but his time of 3:51.98 was good enough to see off the American Tom Dolan, gold medalist in the 400m individual medley. A finalist in the 200m and the 4x200m relay, Palmer was behind Dolan for the first half of the race but overtook him in the third 100 metres to finish second behind New Zealand's Danyon Loader. Dolan, ultimately, finished fourth in 3:53.91.

South Africa's Penelope Heynes, meanwhile, is cutting through records. Having set a world mark for the 100m breaststroke on Sunday, she added an Olympic record for the 200m breaststroke with 2:26.63.

## SCARLET FACES IN ATLANTA

Yesterday's Olympic bloomers

The fickle mood swings of the Olympic results computer were drying journalists crazy again yesterday.

The multi-million dollar results systems began the day in benign mood. First it awarded a track cycling world record to the Australian Bradley McGee and then, in a spirit of Olympic generosity, delivered the same accolade to Denmark's Jan Bo Petersen. The track cycling begins today.

But then it got its bytes in a tangle, turned nasty and spluttered out a waspishly misleading "fencing" result. Hungary beat Spain in the semi-finals of the men's team epee event, it said. Wrong, both Hungary and Spain had been eliminated in the quarter-finals about an hour earlier.

The most bizarre lapse was awarding Asian records to all 36 weightlifters in Monday's 64kg snatch section. The lucky lifters included 10 Europeans, five Latin Americans, two from the United States and one each from Africa and Canada.

Even more fortunate were Tony Anala of the Solomon Islands and Wang Guohua of China. According to the results, they failed to register a lift. But, what the heck, they got Asian records too.

**TODAY'S NUMBER**  
**330,000**

The population of the Comoro Islands in the Indian Ocean whose first team at an Olympic Games - four men and two women - will compete in the 100, 200, 400 and 800 metres track events.



## 4 the cricket page

**Hidden Personality**  
And she gets to play in pantomime – a sort of female Frank Bruno, if that is not an insult. The Fairy Godmother at Lewisham was her latest triumph.

# The special tensions of England v Pakistan



Tomorrow will see the renewal of hostilities between two countries with an acrimonious past. Derek Pringle has experienced it all

**E**very sport, wherever and whenever it has been played, has always had its rivalries and grudge matches.

Over the last 20 years, England's cricketers would have seen Australia and the West Indies as the most desirable teams to beat, with Pakistan the side most likely to get the blood bubbling. But if the former remain on the healthy side of competition, the latter has been filled with acrimony as old prejudices surface.

In the case of England and Pakistan, the reasons are complex and have a history which, if not exactly ancient, certainly goes back to the partition of India in 1947, and to the painful birth of the new nation state of Pakistan, since when a million uprootings and mass migration have kept its proud people on the boil.

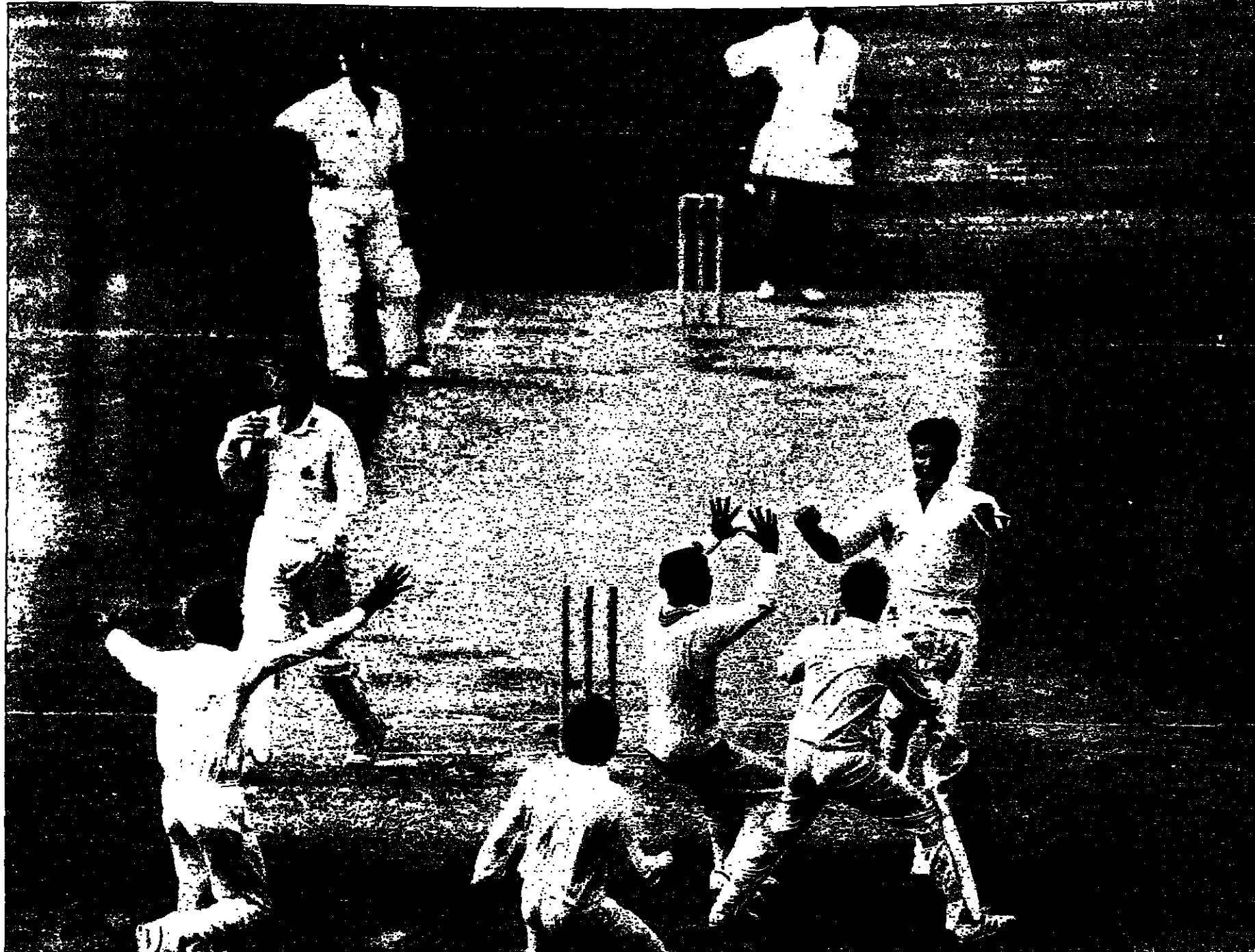
Its cricketers, too, have rarely ever simmered in their bid to bring wider recognition to their country and themselves. It is what makes them more serious and hot-headed than their neighbours in India, who look upon them as a weary senior citizen might quizzically gaze upon a petulant child.

Representing a country devoted to Islam and one that takes its cricket almost as seriously as a weighty responsibility and not one for the faint of heart.

To recall the widespread outrage when Pakistan lost to India in the quarter-finals of the recent World Cup – Wasim Akram and several other players had effigies of themselves burnt and their houses stoned – is to realise that winning is of overriding national importance.

But it is winning is important generally. It is virtually compulsory at home, where politicians and those who run cricket need the necessary diversions as they lurch from one public scandal to the next. But even the most down-trodden can spot a subterfuge, and all but two of England's eight tours there have been interrupted by political riots.

On one occasion, the Lahore Test of 1977-78 was interrupted on two successive days, as Benazir Bhutto and supporters of her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, came to confront General Zia, who had recently deposed and incarcerated him. In Pakistan, sport is politics and the infrastructure around cricket has often been more viperish, and possessed more



Battle scars: Waqar Younis dismisses David Gower in 1992 and Mike Gatting's infamous clash with Shakaor Rana (below)

Photographs: Peter Jay/Graham Morris

hidden agendas, than the most convoluted of John Le Carré's plots.

During the 1987 World Cup, Graham Gooch was invited to a prominent former Pakistan player's house for dinner. However, once a hasty meal had been eaten, it became clear that there was a political angle to the evening, and Gooch was asked why England had not complained about the appointment of the then manager of the Pakistan team, the ex-player in question clearly wanting him out of the way. Such chicanery, whilst amusing to many, later led Gooch to comment that captaining England seemed a doddle in comparison.

It is not surprising, then, that winning by all means necessary has become a way of life in Pakistan. It is a necessity that gave rise to the recent phenomenon of reverse swing, which although sporadically achievable legally can be virtually guaranteed when the ball is tampered with. As a discovery, it is touched with genius, but unlike picking the seam and shining the ball with lip balm, it has roughed up the level playing field to such an extent that it cannot, like the others, simply be ignored.

Not surprisingly, England have always found themselves under great pressure when they travel to Pakistan, and it is on tours there, stretching back to 1951-52, that most of the ill-will between the two countries has developed. A feeling that time has clearly not healed, as Tom Graveney's outburst during the ball-tampering row in 1992 proved.

But apart from the discomfort of alien conditions on and off the field, the main cause for complaint has been poor umpiring, with accusations of blatant cheating being a familiar claim. Those who have toured claim it to be a one-way street and the first time Javed Miandad was dismissed *lbw* on home soil, he was given out by an Australian umpire. A momentous event your correspondent happened to witness from mid-on.

I even heard it alleged, by a Pakistani player, that it wasn't unusual for all the umpires to be rounded up before a home series and coerced into giving Pakistan favourable decisions. If so, the concept of neutral umpires has been a good one; not only for the game in general but for legitimately confirming Pakistan's de-



served high standing in Test cricket.

Even so, Pakistani players can be quick to develop a sense of grievance when the umpiring goes against them. On a tour to Sri Lanka, one prominent player became so infuriated by his team's lack of success with *lbw* appeals that he ran up to the umpire with a copy of *Wisden* opened on the relevant page.

But the blame cannot all be heaped upon one side. Indeed, on the 1955-56 MCC tour, the captain,

Donald Carr, was held responsible for his players dousing the umpire Idris Beigh with water after he had given what were perceived to be four injudicious *lbw* decisions against them in the final "unofficial" Test, a match the visitors, coincidentally, needed to win in order to square the series.

A furore in the media ensued and Lord Alexander, then president of the MCC, offered to recall the team, promising to pay compensation for any lost revenue. But if the deed itself was reprehensible enough, for Pakistanis with not such long memories, the insult was duly compounded when Carr was made tour manager for England's 1972-73 tour. It was an appointment that confirmed to many the ingrained arrogance of those who run English cricket; an impression Michael Atherton reinforced with his refusal to send a written apology to the Pakistani journalist whom he referred to as a "buffoon" during the recent World Cup.

There is no doubt that in its extreme forms Islamic justice can be barbaric. But while no one in Pak-

istan would have wanted to see the removal of the finger with which Mike Gatting so famously jabbed umpire Shakaor Rana during their altercation in the Faisalabad Test of 1987, the £1,000 hardship bonus the TCCB awarded each player was contemptuous of local outrage. It also confused some within the TCCB, and until he was informed to the contrary, Doug Insole, the chairman of the overseas tours committee, was under the impression it was a "slightly harsh" fine.

The attitude of most England players on recent tours has done little to break down these barriers. Few ever attempt to embrace or understand the culture they suddenly find themselves plunked in the middle of, preferring instead to cocoon themselves away with videotapes and an array of familiar comforts. But as Allan Lamb showed when he horsed around with a policeman on the boundary in Peshawar, it doesn't take an enormous amount of effort to win the locals over.

However, once a feud is set up it is not easily defused, as it gets passed from one dressing-room generation

to the next, snowballing in weight and significance until the original grudge – a dodgy decision or two – becomes mutated to the broad swathes of prejudice such as "PAKI CHEAT" beloved of tabloid headline-makers and now sadly part of the lingua franca wherever English is spoken.

Powerful personalities play their part in perpetuating these feuds. Something the current Ian Botham versus Imran Khan spat continues to reinforce even if cheating and class and not old grievances, are claimed to be at its core. These two all-rounders were undoubtedly great rivals on the field. But Botham was never more wound up than when confronted by Javed Miandad, a man for whom he formed an almost pathological dislike.

Mind you, he was not alone and Javed's ability to wind up just about everyone he ever played with or against often masked the brilliance of his play. Personally, I found him more of a mischief-maker than a villain and, with bat in hand, riveting to watch. His tactical flexibility as a

England v Pakistan	
Test history	
1954 in England: series drawn 1-1	
1958-59 in Pakistan: England won 2-0	
1962 in England: England won 4-0	
1966 in Pakistan: Pakistan won 2-1	
1968-69 in Pakistan: Pakistan won 2-0	
1972-73 in England: England won 2-1	
1974-75 in Pakistan: Pakistan won 4-0	
1977-78 in Pakistan: Pakistan won 4-0	
1982-83 in Pakistan: Pakistan won 4-0	
1984-85 in England: England won 3-1	

batman – deciding how to combat certain bowlers on a certain pitch – was second to none, and he bestrode Test and one-day cricket with equal facility. The players down at Glamorgan thought none the less of him, either, and have nothing but praise for the expertise and help he lent to players during his 10-year stint there.

In fact, it was much the same with Imran at Sussex, Salim Malik at Essex, Wasim at Lancashire, Waqar Younis at Surrey, Mushtaq at Somerset (to name a few), all having their praises sung in purest falsetto.

It is only when they pull on their green cap with its crescent moon badge that the drama and excessive appealing starts, and likeable, sane fellows turn into a howling pack of pumped-up Dominic Corks, a transformation that left Robin Smith seething and visibly upset after playing against his Hampshire team-mate Aqib Javed.

Much of the behaviour on both sides stems from individual insecurity over one's place in the side. Yet if Pakistan has been prey to far more interminable bickering than England, this summer's tourists look as settled as any side since Imran was at the helm. Unlike England, they are at least prepared to make an effort abroad and Wasim has promised a gentle tour. But if some of their excesses are better off behind them, it will be a shame if, like the over-cautious driver, their cricket suffers from too much due care and attention.

## If any lateral thought went into England's selection for Lord's, it was not discernible to the naked eye

Pakistan's opening bowlers, Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, have been described in the past few days as the best new-ball pairing in the world. If this were true, they might not be so dangerous.

The best new-ball pair in the world are surely Curly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh, of the West Indies. The second-best are probably Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock, of South Africa. Wasim and Waqar come in third (though you could make a case, without being entirely facetious, for Glenn McGrath and Paul Reifel, the deceptively effective Australians).

It is not that the two Pakistanis are not great fast bowlers. It is just that their distinguishing feature is an ability to bowl better with the old ball than the new ball. This turns the game on its head. For the spectator, it is excellent news. Those sleepy afternoons when the score is 200 for two are transformed into the sort of setting you find in the films of David Lynch, where every bright surface is just a portent of darkness, and any sense of security is a false one. Each boundary the umpire signals just brings the moment nearer when the ball

begins to reverse swing, the wickets start to clatter and the toes begin to bruise.

For the opposition, it is not good news at all. When the bowlers get as much lateral movement as Wasim and Waqar, the batting side need to do some lateral thinking. This, by definition, is not something that comes naturally to any of us; least of all professional cricketers.

If any lateral thought went into England's selection for tomorrow's first Test at Lord's, it was not discernible to the naked eye. The squad was the team that played the third Test against India – minus Min Patel, plus Ian Salisbury, Nick Knight and Simon Brown. Knight and Brown appear to be on stand-by for Nasser Hussain and Chris Lewis, although it will not be a great surprise tomorrow if Lewis is fit and Brown sneaks in ahead of Alan Mullally.

The last time the selectors picked two similar players in a squad – Ronnie Irani and Mark Ealham at Trent Bridge – it looked like a tactical way of telling the one in possession that he had done well, but not so well that he was still the one in possession. Otherwise, it is stay as you are. After all the



TIM DE LISLE

years of chopping and changing, this is good to see. Or is it? Pakistan pose a threat unlike that of any other country – especially India, who bowled well, if too short, with the new ball and then fell away badly.

Mike Atherton and David Lloyd know all there is to know about Wasim, and Alec Stewart, who is still technically England's vice-captain, yields to no one in his knowledge of Waqar. But I wonder if they have done their homework. Last time England played Pakistan was in 1992. The Pakistan line-up now is remarkably similar to what it was then. When it comes to a Test series in England, they have been here and won that.

What swung it for them was a single factor: Wasim and Waqar's proficiency with the old ball. It was a five-match series

and there were two dull draws, in the first and third Tests. Pakistan won the second and fifth, and England won the fourth – at Headingley, where any old seamer can be a world-beater.

On the scorecards for those three Tests you can almost see the moment when the reverse swinging started. At Lord's, England subsided from 197 for three to 255 all out in the first innings, and then from 108 for two to 175 all out. At Headingley, 270 for one became 320 all out. At the Oval, 138 for two became 207 all out, and 153 for five became 174 all out.

The contribution made by England's bottom six in those matches went like this: 65 runs for 11 times out; two (yes, two) for six; and 48 for 11. Grand total: 115 runs from 28 completed innings. And just two not outs because the only players who could cope with the reverse swing were proper batsmen who were already set: Stewart, carrying his bat for 69 at Lord's; David Gower, stranded on 19 at Headingley; Robin Smith, 84 not out at the Oval.

There are two possible conclusions to be drawn. Either it is unrealistic to expect any runs from your lower order, and you are better off playing five

batsmen, a wicketkeeper and your five best bowlers, irrespective of batting ability – in which case SOS calls had better go out this morning to Phil Tufnell and Devon Malcolm (who, the *Independent* on Sunday revealed, would be in Alan Donald's England team). Or you need to shuffle the order, making sure that there is grit, experience and high skill at No 6.

Smith would have been perfect for the job. Instead, it will go to Ealham, the plucky novice, or to Graeme Hick. He is still (just) England's regular No 5. If England play six batsmen tomorrow, he will be pushed down to No 6 – straight into the danger zone. For this series only, Hick should go up to No 4, or even No 3, above Hussain. Graham Thorpe, who is in the best form of his life, should be asked to hold the innings together at No 6. And if Knight plays, Stewart should drop down to No 5.

The chances of all this happening, it has to be said, are slim; which is one reason why, in my book, Pakistan are firm favourites.

Tim de Lisle is editor of *Wisden Cricket Monthly*.

## Yorkshire lead the treble chasers

### THE WEEK AHEAD

side's remaining fixtures present any obvious banana skins.

Five of Yorkshire's seven opponents are in the bottom half of the table and four of the matches are on home territory. Surrey have to travel four times but only Warwickshire, who must go to the Oval, can be described as fellow contenders. In the Sunday League, similarly, matches to come offer few pointers. Interestingly, both still have to play second-placed Northamptonshire.

It would be disrespectful to others, of course, to suggest that a two-horse race is in the offing in either league competition. Only four points cover the first eight places in the Sunday League and in the Championship, equally, they could both be unseated, although genuine title contenders can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Second-placed Leicestershire have played a match fewer than both in the Championship, as have Kent and Derbyshire, fourth and fifth, who engage one another at Derby, starting tomorrow. Should Derbyshire succeed in following up their fine victory at Old Trafford, their own claims would be much strengthened.

But Leicestershire, who have beaten Yorkshire, Essex and Gloucestershire consecutively, pose a greater threat than either and they will expect to defeat Sussex at Grace Road.

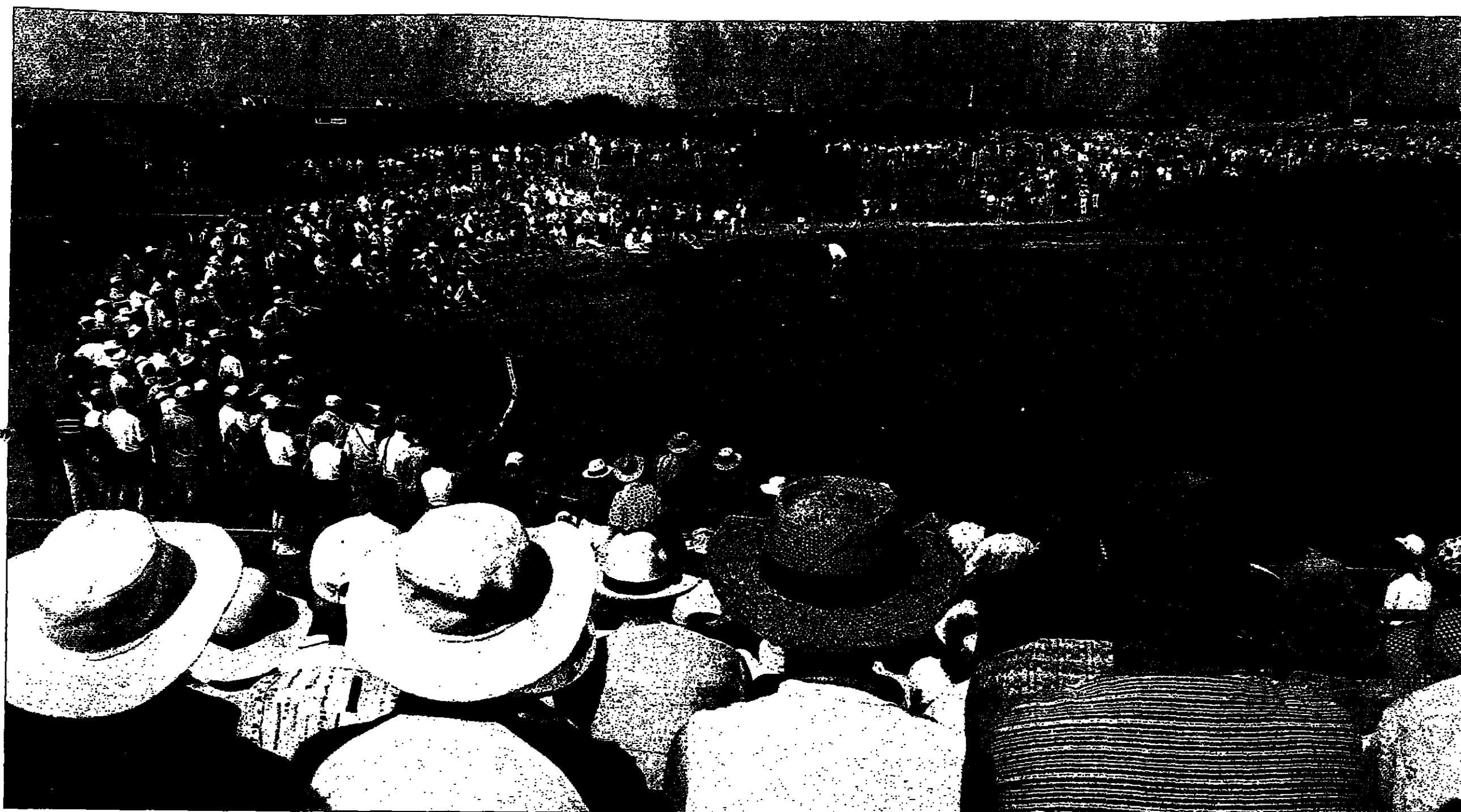
Middlesex, fourth in the Sunday League, retain an outside chance in the Championship but miss the next round, which should be to the benefit of Warwickshire, two points behind them with a game in hand in seventh place, who meet Gloucestershire at Cheltenham. In the Nat West, meanwhile, it would be risky, one suspects, to predict a semi-final line-up that did not include Lancashire, the Benson and Hedges Cup holders, who will aim to avenge Derbyshire's Championship success when the two meet again at Old Trafford.

In the other quarter-final, Essex's chances of overcoming Hampshire depend considerably on their ability to contain Robin Smith, whose brilliant 158 off 151 balls against Worcestershire in the last round underlined his intention to make a trip to Lord's in September the climax of his benefit season.

Jon Culley



**Hidden Personality**  
If this sounds like someone who has retired, you would have been right... until January this year.



Spectators take in the action on the sixth green at Royal Lytham: You needed factor 15 sun block, a wide-brimmed hat and, above all, you needed to bring imagination

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Just as Phineas Taylor Barnum merged with Bailey to produce the "Greatest Show on Earth", there must have been a Mr Royal who teamed up with a Mr Ancient with another kind of circus in mind. While not actually kitted out in top hat, tails and a whip to tame the badly behaved, the ringmaster of the R&A's annual show, Michael Bonallack, must have mentally stood outside the gates of Royal Lytham and St Anne's last week and shouted for all he was worth. "Roll up, roll up. Come inside, for a mere £22, and watch men weep as they perform feats of magic. Roll up, roll up, to our tented shopping mall, where we will make your money disappear." Just like the show with clowns, elephants and a high wire, it's damn difficult to resist.

You needed factor 15 block at Lytham this year as the sun decided to turn its thermostat up full. You needed a wide-brimmed hat. And, above all, you needed to bring imagination. Barnum at least had the vision to put all his acts inside a ring with the audience seated around the show. In his circus tent you never heard people say: "Who is that clown? What ring is he playing? How did he do that yesterday? I can't see, did he manage to avoid that custard pie hazard? His partner, where is that other clown from? Was that applause? Did he pull that joke off? I can't see. How much money do you think he gets for using that red nose?"

Mr Barnum, sorry, I mean Mr Bonallack, knows you need imagination to come to his circus. Just to let you know you're going to the "latest, greatest show on earth", the road signs of "Open Golf" directing the audience to Lytham, near Blackpool, seem to start around Watford (and probably Inverness). The car parking system has more castles than Hinduism: the Brahman priests and scholars are directed to car park A; the Kshatriyas, the mil-

itary and rulers, are also in A. The Vaisyas, the farmers and merchants, are directed to park B. The Sudras, the peasants and labourers, are directed to somewhere near Preston. The untouchables are kept well away from things in a large enclosure known as the press tent.

To help the imagination along, the £4.50 souvenir programme shows a beautiful picture of Royal Lytham's 18th hole and clubhouse. The pil-

*'If the course is a tapestry of genius, most soon discover they have spent good money to see the threads hanging out the back'*

grims who have been to the show before know they must memorise this scene because they will never see anything that looks like it during the four days of performance. There is also a sepia-toned photograph from the Roaring Twenties of men in sweaters, neck ties, plus fours, bunnets and cradles, no audience. Only the Californian circus fans who have spent a decade in self-actualisation ther-

apy can walk round the golf course show rings and pretend nothing has changed from the days of Louise Brooks, Fred Astaire and Bob Jones. Everyone else? Well, they are still looking for this wide open space called the 18th fairway. And where exactly is this place they call the golf course, anyway? If the real course is a tapestry of genius (which it is), most will soon discover they have spent good money to see the threads hanging out the back. It needs imagination to conjure up the view from the front.

Remember the cute view in the programme? Gone. In its place are grandstands, ropes, steel barriers, giant scoreboards, a gigantic television screen that shows the circus as unpolluted and empty as the closing holes of the Royal Gobi Desert Country Club, and enough food and drink tents, vans and kiosks to solve anything the United Nations High Commission for Refugees could throw at them.

The car park caste system invades the course, too: rank (member or day visitor), restriction, hierarchy, status, tribe (blazer or Blackpool beach vest), Bollinger or bitter tent, all reflect golf's obsession with class. Access, however, is the god to be worshipped. Access to walk on the course, behind players, beyond ropes, is given only to players, officials, selected scribes and the high priests and

## BEING THERE

Jim Cusick went to see the Open Championship at Royal Lytham, but he ended up at the circus

priestesses, photographers who capture the magic of the circus.

The daily Order of Play is your imagination's guidebook.

"Thursday 18th July. 7.33am. Game Four. Nick Faldo, Robert Allenby, Fuzzy Zoeller.

"Damn, it's... well, it must be 12.08pm because isn't that Brett Ogle teeing off?"

"So, if it's four and half hours a round, if we run to the 18th we'll see Nick coming in."

These words came from the Open Arms bar. The general who said

them had induced frenzy in his troops. They were all armed with plastic milk crates, baseball bats, binoculars, shorts, no socks, sandals and sunstroke. Bad sunstroke, because no one in their right mind runs in 90 degree heat. But this battalion were a rarity. They were fans intent on "seeing" golf. They had been out on the course for hours. The bar was only used to replenish supplies in their assault.

For others, the casuals with the expensive access tag dangling from their Pringle, Lauren or Boss polo shirts, the course and the process of actually seeing golf was a mere passing intrusion as they winced and dined in the corporate hospitality enclosures.

"Where are we again? Is it Lyle Way or Woomnam Way?" said a polo shirt at the Bollinger tent.

"Have you been out there?" asked another pink polo shirt.

"Nah, got as far as that bit where the 3rd green, the 7th tee, and the 6th green are. Couldn't see a bloody thing. Drink, I need drink. Excuse me, over here!"

To be fair, the Bollinger brigade had done rather well in getting to the 7th tee. En route they would have passed through a maze of ropes marshalled by would-be home secretaries intent on enforcing a harsh regime of law and order.

"Have you left your cattle prod at home, then?" asked an irate polo shirt. "Sorry, sir, I have my orders."

In the middle of a heated exchange that made the Bosnia peace deal look simple, another marshal held up a tall, thin sign above the crowd: "The Open Championship. Stand Still. Quiet." People stood still. People were quiet. If only they had had one of those signs in Northern Ireland a fortnight ago. None of that Orange mess need have got out of hand.

At the 7th tee, you could see, well, something. Men putting, men dri-

*'You have no bloody clue where the ball is, how many times it has been hit, whether the man with the club is about to chuck it all in'*

ving, men chipping, men talking to their caddies, men hitting their clubs on the ground, men raising their heads in the air, men swearing. Rarely, however, could you guess what it all meant. Ringside, at the R&A's Greatest Open on Earth, you marvel at the strange and weird, the mighty and the majestic, but you have no bloody clue where the ball is, how many times it has been hit, whether

the man with the club is about to chuck it all in and sell sweaters for the rest of his life, or whether that last shot has taken him into a tie for 12th spot with Tiger III, James IV, Colin the Angry, Padraig the Unpronounceable, Jack the Lionheart or King Fred.

Television is the great giver of wisdom. Without it the Modern and Ancient game would still be as popular a spectator sport as Himalayan fell running. Towers, satellites, scanner vans, miles of cables, a royal dinner service of dishes beaming pictures from every acre of every part of the circus. So inside the Famous Grouse beer and whisky tent, inside the fake restaurants of Faldo Way or Lyle Avenue, inside the clubhouse itself and inside the press tent, the jigsaw, the picture, the performances all begin to make sense.

On Thursday, as Lord Nicklaus of St Andrews defied age and stroked his way to a 66, two fanatics applauded behind the steel barriers of the 18th green. They had followed the great man from start to finish.

They said they saw everything. "Ah, but when it was happening, how much did you understand?" I asked.

Looking as though they had just yomped from Goose Green to Blackpool, and with the plastic milk crates they had used to stand on for a better view almost melting, they admitted: "You just felt it, even if you didn't see it. That's why you come, isn't it?"

Indeed, the milk-crated duo had come to Lytham armed with the Open's most crucial ingredient - imagination. William Shakespeare, as far as I can recall, never mentioned "the golfe" in the Scottish play. But he knew about imagination. Next year, above the kiosks where they take the punters' £22 circus entry fee, they should put the words: "Tell me where is fancy bred. Or in the heart or in the head?" Not that they need to be told, of course.

## 'Frontiersmen' pushing the white-water limits

Close to the sporting soul of white South Africans lies the need to test themselves to the limit. It may be something bred into the Afrikaner psyche since the Voortrekkers were chased from Cape Town over mountain passes and into the country's interior in their ox wagons in the 1780s. Alternatively, their relish for herculean events may rise from the years of isolation and their banishment from Olympian events. Or it may just be the frontierland machismo. But there is plainly a need to ask searching questions of their character.

Running marathons or canoeing down wild rivers are fine as far as they go. But they don't go far enough for South Africans. There is the Comrades Marathon (a 90km race in sipping heat and humidity); the Duzi (a three-day canoe marathon in the Drakensberg mountains); the Two Oceans Marathon (a 56km run from the Indian to the Atlantic oceans); and the Berg River Canoe Marathon.

The Berg River race is a floating Tour de Western Province. A four-day, 215km paddle through glorious countryside from Paarl in the wine-growing uplands to the rich estuary

and wetlands around Port Owen on the Atlantic. It is billed as an African adventure as much as a race - at the whim of South Africa's mercurial winter weather. When this year's event finished on 13 July, 35 of the 238 entrants had failed to complete it. And this year the Berg behaved itself as the rain and feared north-westerly wind held off.

When the wind blows into the faces of the paddlers, it can sap the strength to the point that exhausted men and women have to be pulled from the finish, four days of work ripped from them. Torrential rain and snow in the river's headlands can turn the Berg into a pumping beat. Bridges are engulfed and its normal width of 20 to 30 metres can be swollen to 100 metres in the flatter sections or roar up the river banks to submerge trees in the valleys.

"A couple of years ago we had a Dutch team here and one of their guys said to me, 'We have rivers like this in Holland - except that the trees are on the bank', recalled John Oliver, of the KwaZulu-Natal Canoe Union. It is not a particularly tech-

## SPORT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Andy Colquhoun reports on a canoe trek down a raging river in South Africa

nical race with lots of rapids, but when the river is turbulent and boils and bubbles, it can lead to wrist problems as you try and control the canoe. It is an endurance event on a river that can be a monster. Each 50km stage takes the leader about four hours to complete, with the last person usually home two and a half hours later.

Lee McGregor, a 45-year-old Durban doctor, paddled to fifth place this year as a training partner for his 18-year-old son, Hank, who

finished eighth. Hank is favourite for the junior title at the world canoe marathon championships in Sweden next month. "We arrived down here five days before the race to get used to the river, and at first we were paddling among the leaves on the tops of the trees - that's how high the river was," he said.

"The next day we were down among the branches; the next day among the trunks, and now we're down among the roots - I don't know where the hell I am. You come round a bend and there's a tree straight in front of you. You don't know whether to go left, right or centre."

The event has claimed two lives (in 1983 and 1984) in its 35-year history, since when the sponsors, wine-makers KWV, have tightened up the marathon's safety procedures. The army medical corps provides a mobile unit at the end of each stage. The police patrol the river with two rescue boats and a helicopter circles overhead, doubling as a camera mount for television. A tented village with mobile catering from church groups follows the race, providing competitors with three hot meals a

day for their 220 rand (£35) entry fee. Each night, a camp fire is lit and a mobile disco starts up while a snacks tent and the sponsors' bar tent dispense Dutch courage, free of charge. The competitors' supporters churn up country lanes in the race to the river's infrequent vantage points. At night they sleep in tents, in their cars or campers, or in barns.

For an unprecedented sixth successive time, this year's race was won by the Yorkshire-born Robbie Herrevel, who moved to Johannesburg with his parents when he was 10. He is one of some 20 full-time canoeists in the race, and each night prefers driving up to 50km to find a hotel bed.

## SPORTING VERNACULAR

No 6 HEATS

No shortage of heats in Atlanta, or heat for that matter, whether it is the humidity of the setting or the roasting the hapless organisers are being given for their inadequate preparations. Indeed, the word must seem cruelly literal to competitors getting ready to swelter in their blocks, the preliminary rounds in Atlanta offering a perfect demonstration of the word's multiple meanings: temperature, psychological pressure ("if you can't stand the heat"), intense competitive effort (ambition, it should be remembered, always burns).

Oddly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* doesn't include an explicit definition for the contemporary sense of an elimination round, giving instead a 19th-century sporting usage which suggests a single competition broken into different stages. It isn't clear when that semantic adjustment took place, but the most obvious original source for the current term is horse racing, in which a "heat" was used to describe a run given to a horse purely by way

of exercise before a big event - what would now be known more temperately as a warm-up.

But there are other meanings, too, which seem to lend extra poetic force to the current usage. Heat has long had a connection with physical excitement, sometimes sexual (to be "on heat") but by no means always. And a "heat" could also mean a single intense exertion; to do something "at a single heat" was to do it in one go, a meaning which probably derives from foundry work, in which a "heat" was the term given to any one of the multiple heating operations applied to the ore. Each successive heat improved the metal, so it isn't entirely fanciful, perhaps, to see some notion of refining or annealing fire preserved in the athletic sense. The term might even be taken as a good example of a linguistic serendipity, with several overlapping usages, blending together to create a verbal alloy that is stronger than any one component.

Thomas Sutcliffe



# 6 olympic games

**Hidden Personality**  
It was then that she decided, despite being almost 40 (at the time) and with five Olympics behind her, she might still be good enough for another go, planning to raise money for a children's charity into the bargain.

# A complete form guide to the

## 100 metres men

After an up-and-down season, the defending champion, Linford Christie, could as easily finish first as last in the final. Frankie Fredericks - who fancies Christie's chances - and Donovan Bailey are the men to beat.

**Records**  
World 9.85 Leroy Burrell (US) 1994  
Olympic 9.92 Carl Lewis (US) 1983  
British 9.87 Linford Christie 1993

**1996 - best times in the world**  
9.85 Frankie Fredericks (Namibia)  
9.92 Ato Boldon (Trinidad)  
9.92 Donovan Mitchell (US)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
10.04 Linford Christie  
10.13 Darren Braithwaite  
10.24 Ian Macleod



Christie: Needs to find an extra gear to retain his title

**First three forecast**  
1. Fredericks  
2. Bailey (Carl)  
3. Christie

## 400m

Michael Johnson, with his ability to maintain his iconic sprinting form seemingly for ever, looks an unstoppable. The world record holder, Butch Reynolds, is his only real rival. Roger Black is good for bronze.

**Records**  
World 43.29 Butch Reynolds (US) 1986  
Olympic 43.30 Quincy Watts (US) 1992  
British 44.27 Roger Black 1996

**1996 - best times in the world**  
43.44 Michael Johnson (US)  
43.91 Butch Reynolds (US)  
44.09 Allen Henson (US)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
44.37 Roger Black  
44.49 Ian Thomas  
44.66 Duane Ludlow



Black: Another British record should be enough for a medal

**First three forecast**  
1. Johnson  
2. Reynolds  
3. Black

## 800m

In a quiet year for the event, Vegard Pradal, of Norway, and Hezekiel Sepeng, of South Africa, head the rankings, but the ubiquitous veteran American Johnny Gray may yet surprise them all.

**Records**  
World 1:41.73 Sebastian Coe (GB) 1981  
Olympic 1:42.43 Johnny Gray (GB) 1984  
British 1:41.73 Sebastian Coe 1981

**1996 - best times in the world**  
1:42.56 Vegard Pradal (Nor)  
1:43.47 Hezekiel Sepeng (SA)  
1:43.76 Benjamin Limo (Ken)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
1:43.69 Gary Wicks  
1:45.73 Chris Brasher  
1:46.31 David Smith



Pradal: The Norwegian is the fastest competitor in the field

**First three forecast**  
1. Sepeng  
2. Brasher  
3. Gray

## 1500m

Unassuming Marcel is the greatest middle-distance runner of his generation, unbeaten since 1992. The year he failed to live up to his billing at Barcelona. Four years on, the opposition is stronger.

**Records**  
World 3:27.37 Noureddine Morceli 1995  
Olympic 3:22.53 Sebastian Coe (GB) 1984  
British 3:29.67 Steve Cram 1985

**1996 - best times in the world**  
3:29.60 Noureddine Morceli (Alger)  
3:29.59 Hickam E. Gurmoo (Mor)  
3:30.09 Veronique Hingebach (Bel)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
3:34.47 Anthony Williams  
3:34.62 John Maycock  
3:37.50 Peter Murray



Morceli: Algeria expects him to make no mistake this time

**First three forecast**  
1. Morceli  
2. Williams  
3. Hingebach

## 5,000m

Hailu Gebreselassie, of Ethiopia, the double world record holder, is favourite to win at both 5,000 and 10,000 metres. Salah Hissou, of Morocco, is the man most likely to provide the upset of the Games.

**Records**  
World 12:44.39 Hailu Gebreselassie 1995  
Olympic 12:50.59 Said Aouita (Mor) 1984  
British 13:00.41 David Moorcroft 1982

**1996 - best times in the world**  
12:50.59 Hailu Gebreselassie (Eth)  
12:58.75 Bob Kennedy (US)  
12:59.19 Tomoya Taniuchi (Jpn)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
13:17.48 John Nuttall



Hissou: Has come closest to the Gebreselassie standard

**First three forecast**  
1. Gebreselassie  
2. Hissou  
3. D. Komen (Ken)

## 10,000m

The longer of his two events comes first for the awesome Gebreselassie. He has the ability to win off a fast or slow pace, as he showed when taking the world championship in Gothenburg last year.

**Records**  
World 26:43.52 Hailu Gebreselassie 1995  
Olympic 27:12.16 Ibrahim El Guergajou (Alger) 1988  
British 27:33.08 Eamon Martin 1988

**1996 - best times in the world**  
27:40.89 Laila Zeroual (Morocco)  
27:42.17 Robert Johnson (IND)  
27:42.51 Abdallah Benhar (France)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
28:21.40 Jon Brown  
28:28.31 Paul Evans



Gebreselassie: Has all the answers - even for the Kenyans

**First three forecast**  
1. Gebreselassie  
2. P. Tergat (Ken)  
3. W. Biala (Eth)

## Marathon

The humid climate will test all and any of the runners, but the big three, Martin Fie, of Spain, Domingo Ceron, the three-times winner of the London marathon, and Lee Bong-jik, of Korea, should still dominate.

**Records**  
World 2:09:59 Bekele Dinku 1996  
Olympic 2:09:51 Carlos Lopes (Por) 1984  
British 2:07:13 Steve Jones 1985

**1996 - best times in the world**  
2:08.25 Martin Fie (Spain)  
2:08.26 Lee Bong-jik (KOR)  
2:08.30 Gert Thys (Belgium)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
2:10.35 Steve Brace  
2:10.35 Richard Kennerly  
2:10.35 Peter Wharmsey



Fie: Has the durability to add Olympic gold to his world title

**First three forecast**  
1. Fie  
2. D. Ceron (Mex)  
3. Bong-jik

## 3,000m s'chase

Moses Kiptanui, the outstanding world record holder, should lead his team-mates on to the medal podium to celebrate a second successive Kenyan clean sweep.

**Records**  
World 7:59.18 M Kiptanui (Ken) 1995  
Olympic 8:05.51 Julius Kariuki (Ken) 1988  
British 8:07.56 Mark Rowland 1988

**1996 - best times in the world**  
8:08.21 Joseph Kiptanui (Ken)  
8:11.76 A. Lembockel (Italy)  
8:14.23 Matthew Barr (Kenya)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
8:28.93 Keith Cullen  
8:29.19 Justin Chealton  
8:36.71 Spencer Duval



Kiptanui: At the head of an expected Kenyan one-two-three

**First three forecast**  
1. Kiptanui  
2. Cullen  
3. Barr

## Running men have double visions of glory

**Mike Rowbottom**  
prepares two giants of the sprint world on a golden collision course

### 200m

If anyone needed convincing that this event could be one of the most memorable of the 1996 Games, the evidence came last month in Oslo.

On the tight, sheltered Bislett stadium track, Michael Johnson's 21-race unbeaten run in the 200 metres was brought to an end by Frankie Fredericks, whose delight at the end was patent.

"I got him!" yelled the Namibian, whose time of 19.82sec on an evening which was far from ideal for sprinting was a personal best. Until that breakthrough, there seemed little chance that Johnson, the world champion at 200 and 400 metres, would be seriously challenged in his ambition to become the first man to complete that double at the Olympics.

Others have bridged two running events - Carl Lewis took the 100 and 200m gold at Los Angeles in 1984, Alberto Juantorena won the 400 and 800m titles at Montreal in 1976 - but Johnson's intended combination has been out of reach until now.

Johnson has not been beaten at 400 metres for six years, but Fredericks's form this season has created a genuine doubt about his chance in the half-lap sprint even though the American has recently broken the 24-year-old 200m record with a time of 19.66 at the US trials.

Fredericks began the year by becoming the first man to break 20 seconds for an indoor 200m, lowering the world record to 19.92 in Lievin.



Frankie Fredericks (left) ends Michael Johnson's unbeaten run over 200m by defeating him in 19.82sec at the Bislett Games, Oslo. A win that set up the most eagerly awaited showdown of the Atlanta athletics programme

Photograph: Gray Mordinaire/Allsport

After spending two months training with Linford Christie in Australia, Fredericks showed astonishing form outdoors over 100m, running 9.87 on a cool night in Helsinki, and then recording 9.86, just 0.01sec outside the world record, in defeating all the leading sprinters in Lausanne. It was from that kind of form that he stepped up to defeat Johnson two days later.

Johnson, never overly demonstrative, was sanguine in defeat, putting his performance down to a poor start and diplomatically avoiding comment on the apparent flyer with which Fredericks had got away. As the two men had raced side by side down the final straight - Johnson leaning back as if he were running into a gale, Fredericks striving forward with his customary fluency - they presented a thrilling glimpse of what might happen in Atlanta. Assuming both men make their way safely to the final on 1 August, their experiences in other events may be an important factor in the result. Both the 100m, which Fredericks may also contest, and the 400m will have been completed.

While the confrontation between Fredericks and Johnson is the obvious point of interest in the event, there will be enough runners of quality around to ensure they cannot afford to slip below their normal standards, in particular the 1992 Olympic champion Mike Marsh, who pushed Johnson to his world record at the US trials, Jeff Williams, the third American choice, and Trinidad's Ato Boldon, a 22-year-old US-based runner who has shown impressive form this year.

Britain's trio of Christie, John Regis and Owusu Dako will have to be at their very best to make any impact on the event.

**Records**  
World 19.86 Michael Johnson (US) 1996  
Olympic 19.73 Mike Marsh (US) 1992  
British 19.87 John Regis 1994

**Best times in the world - 1996**  
19.86 Michael Johnson (US)  
19.82 Frankie Fredericks (Namibia)  
19.85 Ato Boldon (Trinidad)

**Best British performances - 1996**  
19.86 Linford Christie  
19.82 John Regis  
19.85 Owusu Dako

**Forecast**  
1. Johnson  
2. Fredericks  
3. Marsh

## 110m hurdles

Colin Jackson has struggled to find his most fluent running this year. Allen Johnson, of the United States, and the German Florian Schwaiblmair are the men with the form to fight for the right to be champion hurdler.

**Records**  
World 12.91 Colin Jackson (GB) 1993  
Olympic 12.98 Roger Jackson (GB) 1988  
British 12.91 Colin Jackson 1993

**1996 - best times in the world**  
12.92 Allen Johnson (US)  
13.05 Mark Creer (US)  
13.11 Florian Schwaiblmair (Ger)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
13.13 Colin Jackson  
13.24 Tony Jamet  
13.64 Andy Tulloch



Johnson: One-hundredth of a second off Jackson's record

**First three forecast**  
1. Johnson  
2. Schwaiblmair  
3. Jackson

## Triple jump

The world has been watching to see whether Jonathan Edwards will repeat his wonder year of 1995. It has not happened yet, but he has done enough to keep an edge over the American Mike Conley.

**Records**  
World 18.29m Jonathan Edwards 1995  
Olympic 17.63m Mike Conley (US) 1992  
British 18.29m Jonathan Edwards 1995

**1996 - best times in the world**  
18.29m Jonathan Edwards (Jama)  
17.75m Yovane Quessada (Cub)  
17.70m Steinar Undset (Nor)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
17.82m Jonathan Edwards  
17.38m Fergus Keegan



Edwards: Britain's most realistic hope of an athletics gold medal

**First three forecast**  
1. Edwards  
2. Quessada  
3. A. Harrison (US)

## Decathlon

Dan O'Brien got the moody treatment on the front cover of Newsweek in preparation for his coronation as the best all-round athlete on earth. Daley Thompson's Olympic record could go.

**Records**  
World 8,804pts Dan O'Brien (US) 1992  
Olympic 8,947 Daley Thompson 1984  
British 8,847 Daley Thompson 1984

**1996 - best times in the world**  
8,726 Dan O'Brien (US)  
8,636 Steve Fritz (US)  
8,626 Michael Smith (Canada)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
None



O'Brien: America looks to him to live up to front-cover treatment

**First three forecast**  
1. O'Brien  
2. Fritz  
3. Smith

## 400m hurdles

Derrick Adkins staked his claim at the US trials and on the European grand prix series to be the pretender to the one-lap hurdles crown of his royal predecessors Ed Moses and Kevin Young.

**Records**  
World 46.78 Kevin Young (US) 1992  
Olympic 46.78 Kevin Young (US) 1992  
British 47.82 Viss Vassilov (Bul)

**1996 - best times in the world**  
47.70 Derrick Adkins (US)  
47.85 Samuel Matete (Zambia)  
47.98 Bryan Brown (US)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
48.16 Jon Hagston  
49.79 Gary Jennings  
50.18



Adkins: Crown prince in waiting to the kingdom of Moses

**First three forecast**  
1. Adkins  
2. Matete  
3. Brown

## Shot

Randy Barnes has put the shot further this year than anyone since he set his own world record in 1990. His competitor John Godina is the man most likely to push him for the gold medal.

**Records**  
World 23.21m Randy Barnes 1990  
Olympic 22.47m Ulf Timmergren 1988  
British 21.69m Geoff Cape 1980

**1996 - best times in the world**  
22.40m Randy Barnes (US)  
21.26m Dragon Petric (Yug)  
21.26m John Godina (US)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
19.62m Shaun Phearson



Barnes: The world record-holder should lead a home one-two

**First three forecast**  
1. Barnes  
2. Godina  
3. Petric

## 20km walk

The Mexican Garcia, Schennikov, of Russia, and Mayula, of Belarus - close to the world record this year - are all fancied to finish in front of the reigning world champion, Michele Didi, of Italy.

**Records**  
World 1:18:04 Bo Ljungberg (Swe) 1994  
Olympic 1:19:57 Joze Pribitc (Slo) 1988  
British 1:22:03 Ian Macdonald 1988

**1996 - best times in the world**  
1:18:18 Yevgeny Mayula (Belarus)  
1:18:26 Andrey Schennikov (Russia)  
1:18:41 Igor Koltar (Slovakia)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
None



Didi: Will find it hard to repeat world championship win

**First three forecast**  
1. Garcia (Esp)  
2. Schennikov  
3. Mayula

## High jump

Javier Sotomayor, like Linford Christie, has yet to find his best form this year, and like Christie he has such a firm mental hold on his event that he too may still retain his title. Steve Smith has a bronze chance.

**Records**  
World 2.45m Javier Sotomayor (Cuba) 1993  
Olympic 2.39m G. Igwenkwa (URS) 1988  
British 2.37m Steve Smith 1992

**1996 - best times in the world**  
2.37m Charles Austin (US)  
2.36m Anur Parthia (Poland)  
2.35m Dragutin Topic (Yugoslavia)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
2.31m Steve Smith  
2.31m Danton Grant



Sotomayor: His poor form early in the season should be ignored

**First three forecast**  
1. Sotomayor  
2. Austin  
3. Smith

## Discus

Anthony Washington has thrown further this year than Lars Riedel, a great competitor and three times world champion. Whoever wins, companions will be made with Al Oerter, winner of four Olympic golds.

**Records**  
World 74.08m Arjan Schut (GER) 1986  
Olympic 68.82m Arjan Schut (GER) 1988  
British 64.32m Bill Tancred 1974

**1996 - best times in the world**  
71.14m Anthony Washington (US)  
69.54m Lars Riedel (Germany)  
67.82m Virgilijus Alekna (Lithuania)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
62.32m Glen Smith  
62.02m Bob Viner



Washington: Has name and form to follow in Al Oerter's footsteps

**First three forecast**  
1. Washington  
2. Riedel  
3. Alekna

## 50km walk

Garcia represents the Hispanic tradition in this event against Pionnikov, master of the Slav school. Koronen, of Finland, the world champion, may have to settle for separating the two.

**Records**  
World 3:37:41 Andrei Pionnikov (URS) 1989  
Olympic 3:38:29 Vlastislav Koronen 1988  
British 3:51:37 Chris Macdonald 1990

**1996 - best times in the world**  
3:40:58 Andrei Pionnikov (Russia)  
3:42:30 Nikolai Masluykh (Russia)  
3:42:40 Robert Koronen (Fin)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
None



Koronen: World champion may have to give best to Garcia

**First three forecast**  
1. Garcia (Esp)  
2. Koronen (Fin)  
3. Pionnikov

## Pole vault

Sergei Bubka, the dominant field athlete of the past decade, has a serious rival in Oleg Vertchenko, of South Africa, but should take gold to make up for his Barcelona disaster.

**Records**  
World 6.14m Sergei Bubka (UKR) 1994  
Olympic 5.90m Sergei Bubka (URS) 1988  
British 5.71m Nick Buckfield 1996

**1996 - best times in the world**  
6.02m Sergei Bubka (Ukraine)  
6.01m Oleg Vertchenko (South Africa)  
6.01m Igor Trandarov (Russia)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
5.71m Nick Buckfield  
5.50m Neil Winter



Bubka: Has chance to make up for his Barcelona disaster

**First three forecast**  
1. Bubka  
2. Vertchenko  
3. Trandarov

## Hammer

Balazs Kiss, of Hungary, is the prevailing force in the hammer cage and has the edge over Sergei Gavrilov, of Russia, and Igor Astapkovich, leading lights of the tradition of the former Soviet Union.

**Records**  
World 76.74m Yun Sedyun (URS) 1986  
Olympic 84.80m Sergei Litvinov (URS) 1988  
British 77.54m Martin Grant 1984

**1996 - best times in the world**  
81.76m Balazs Kiss (Hungary)  
81.56m Sergei Gavrilov (Russia)  
80.82m Igor Astapkovich (Belarus)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
75.10m Dave Smith



Astapkovich: Guardian of the tradition of former Soviet Union

**First three forecast**  
1. Kiss  
2. Astapkovich  
3. Gavrilov

## 4 x 100m relay

Dennis Mitchell, Jon Drummond, Mike Marsh, Leroy Burrell, the US are spilt for choice in their squad, with Carl Lewis fifth reserve. They should have something to spare over a crack Canadian squad.

**Records**  
World 37.40 United States 1992  
Olympic 37.40 United States 1992  
British 37.77 Great Britain 1993

**1996 - best times in the world**  
38.16 United States  
38.53 Ukraine  
38.66 Italy

**1996 - bests by British team**  
38.67 Great Britain



Mitchell: The US sprint four will be the hottest of favourites

**First three forecast**  
1. United States  
2. Canada  
3. Nigeria





# track and field events in Atlanta

## 100m women

Since the Barcelona Games, Gwen Torrence has consistently reversed the form with her competitor and the defending champion, Gail Devers. Her only worry is an injury niggle she felt in the US trials.

**Records**  
World 10.49 Florence Griffith-Joyner (US) 1988  
Olympic 10.62 Florence Griffith-Joyner 1988  
British 11.10 Kathy Cook 1981

**1996 - best times in the world**  
10.82 Gwen Torrence (US)  
10.81 Gail Devers (US)  
10.92 Marlene Otterly (Canada)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
11.44 Marlene Otterly  
11.47 Simone Jacobs  
11.52 Stephanie Douglas



Torrence: If fully fit, she should win with something to spare

**First three forecast**  
1. Torrence  
2. Devers  
3. Otterly

## 200m

Gwen Torrence failed to qualify for her stronger event, but Marlene Otterly and Nina Pivlova, neither at their sharpest this season, may have to give way to another American, Carlette Guidry.

**Records**  
World 21.34 Florence Griffith-Joyner 1988  
Olympic 21.34 Florence Griffith-Joyner 1988  
British 22.10 Kathy Cook 1984

**1996 - best times in the world**  
22.14 Carlette Guidry (US)  
22.18 Donnette Young (US)  
22.19 Gail Devers (US)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
22.85 Katherine Merry  
22.95 Simone Jacobs



Otterly: May find one American too many in her way - again

**First three forecast**  
1. Guidry  
2. Otterly  
3. Pivlova

## 400m

A showdown is promised between two marvellous 'fastest' sprinters, the most elegant of women athletes, Marie-José Percec, of France, the Olympic champion, and Cathy Freeman, of Australia.

**Records**  
World 47.60 Maria Yoon (GDR) 1985  
Olympic 48.65 Olga Bryegina (URS) 1988  
British 48.43 Kathy Cook 1984

**1996 - best times in the world**  
48.45 Marie-José Percec (France)  
48.59 Cathy Freeman (Australia)  
49.00 Falilat Ogunkoya (Nigeria)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
51.74 Phyllis Smith  
52.05 Donna Fraser



Percec: Will have her work cut out to beat Freeman

**First three forecast**  
1. Freeman  
2. Percec  
3. Davis (Bolt)

## 800m

Ana Quirot, of Cuba, Fidel Castro's favourite athlete, faces the other great two-lap champion, Maria Mutola, of Mozambique. The Johnson v Fredericks of the women's programme.

**Records**  
World 1:53.28 Jemima Pratichini (GB) 1985  
Olympic 1:53.43 Jemima Pratichini (GB) 1985  
British 1:56.21 Kelly Holmes 1985

**1996 - best times in the world**  
1:57.04 Meredith Rainey (US)  
1:57.24 Natalya Dukhovna (Belarus)  
1:57.38 Ana Quirot (Cuba)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
1:57.84 Kelly Holmes  
1:58.87 Diane Modahl



Quirot: Looking to improve on bronze in Barcelona

**First three forecast**  
1. Mutola (Mad)  
2. Quirot  
3. Rainey

## 5,000m

Sonia O'Sullivan, of Ireland, the world champion, is the outstanding competitor. All Ireland will be looking to her to carry on Michelle Smith's golden feats in the swimming pool.

**Records**  
World 14:36.45 Fernanda Ribeiro (Port) 1985  
Olympic 14:48.07 Zola Budd 1985  
British 14:48.07 Zola Budd 1985

**1996 - best times in the world**  
14:41.07 Fernanda Ribeiro (Portugal)  
14:41.12 Gabriela Szabo (Romania)  
14:44.95 Julia Vazquez (Spain)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
14:52.71 Paula Radcliffe  
15:29.04 Sonia McDermott  
15:48.91 Alison Wyeth



Ribeiro: Main threat to O'Sullivan in her double bid

**First three forecast**  
1. O'Sullivan  
2. Ribeiro  
3. Szabo

## 10,000m

Wang Junxia is back in the shape she showed in 1993 when the Chinese woman won the middle-distance record books and she set her astonishing world best. Tulu will do well to stay in touch.

**Records**  
World 29:31.78 Wang Junxia (China) 1993  
Olympic 30:05.11 Chen Yueling (China) 1992  
British 30:57.07 Liz McColgan 1991

**1996 - best times in the world**  
31:01.76 Wang Junxia (China)  
31:13.21 Ren Xujuan (China)  
31:19.40 Norimi Suzuki (Japan)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
No one selected



Wang Junxia: A former member of 'Red Army' still at the top

**First three forecast**  
1. Wang Junxia  
2. D. Tulu (Eth)  
3. Ribeiro

## Marathon

Liz McColgan is an athlete transformed after changing her training programme under the tutelage of Gertie Walz. Her London Marathon run makes her Machado and Pippig's main rival.

**Records**  
World 2:21:06 Ingrid Hesterman (Nor) 1985  
Olympic 2:24:52 Joan Benoit (US) 1984  
British 2:25:56 Veronique Martel 1989

**1996 - best times in the world**  
2:26:04 Karen Dore (Germany)  
2:27:12 Uta Pippig (Germany)  
2:27:32 Tami Maki (Japan)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
2:27:54 Liz McColgan  
2:33:50 Karen Macdonald  
2:33:50 Suzanne Rigg



McColgan: Back to her best and with a real medal chance

**First three forecast**  
1. McColgan  
2. Pippig  
3. McColgan

## 100m hurdles

The flying American Gail Devers came to grief over the barriers in Barcelona and may find Ludmila Engquist (formerly Narochivska), and world champion five years ago) too strong for her this time.

**Records**  
World 12.21 Yordanka Donkova (Bulg) 1988  
Olympic 12.38 Yordanka Donkova 1988  
British 12.62 Gail Devers 1988

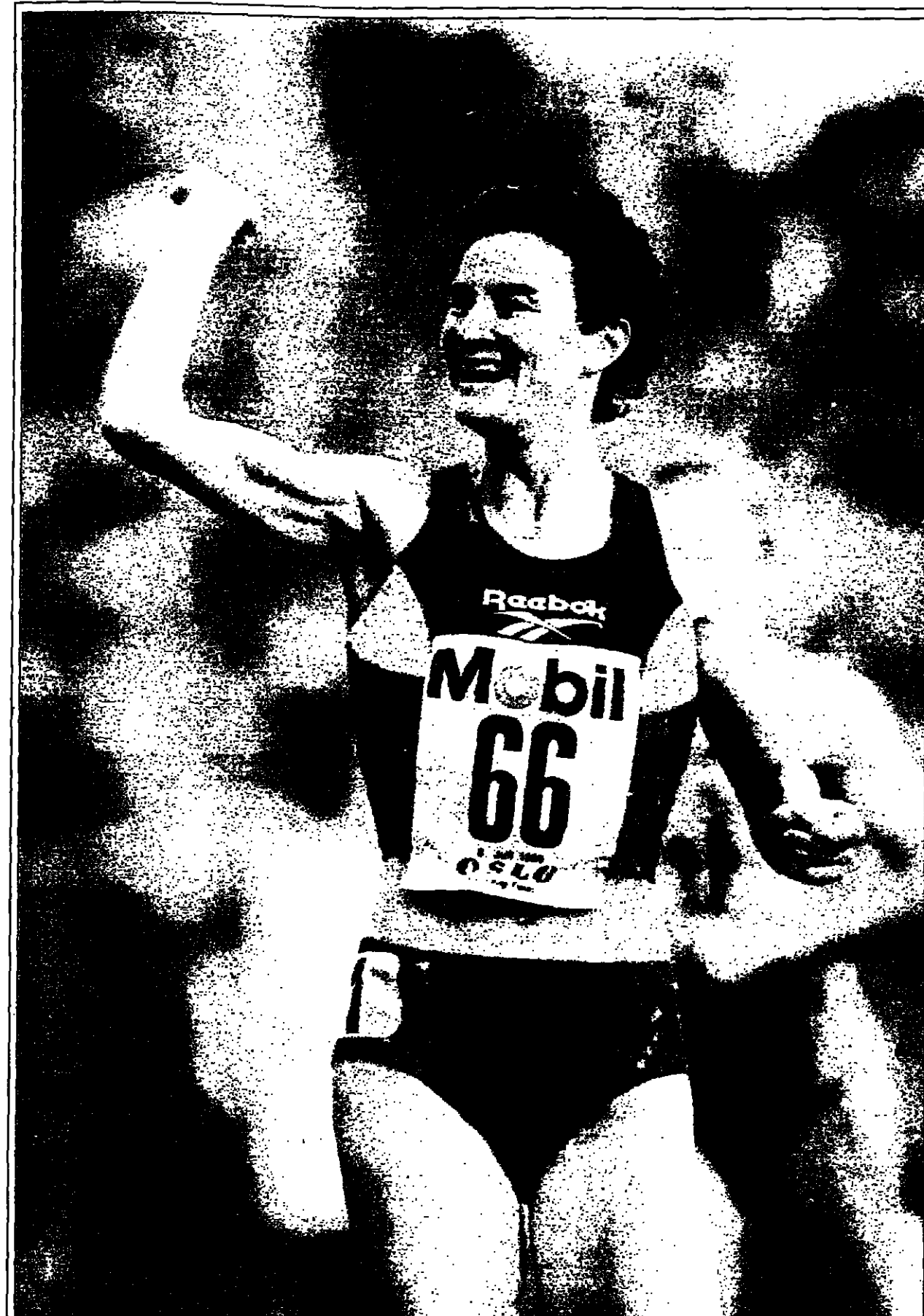
**1996 - best times in the world**  
12:52 Ludmila Engquist (Slovak)  
12:57 Sandra Dombrow (Bel)  
12:59 Natalya Shtepodanova (Russia)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
13:02 Angela Thorpe  
13:18 Jacqui Agnew



Devers: Will be hard-pressed to see off East European challenge

**First three forecast**  
1. Engquist  
2. Devers  
3. Shtepodanova



Sonia O'Sullivan, of Ireland, triumphs in the Bislett Games in Oslo earlier this month Photograph: Allsport

## O'Sullivan hunts more Irish gold

Like the men's 800m, this is likely to be one of the most open and intriguing events of the Games. It offers Sonia O'Sullivan, of Ireland, the opportunity to become the first athlete to complete the Olympic 1500 and 5000m double since Paavo Nurmi, the Flying Finn, in 1928.

O'Sullivan, who won the world title in Gothenburg last year, will run the 5,000m, her main event, first in the programme. She is looking at the "Olympic metric mile" as being an extra after, she hopes, becoming the first Irishwoman to win an Olympic gold medal on the track, following the double-gold feats in Atlanta of Michelle Smith in the pool.

O'Sullivan, who lives and trains in Teddington under the direction of her manager, Kim McDonald, had every right to be in high spirits in Oslo on 5 July after beating several of her main rivals over 1500m in 3min 59.13sec, a time bettered this year only by Svetlana Masterkova of Russia with 3:59.30. If O'Sullivan does succeed at her most favoured distance of 5,000m, she will come to the 1500m with the confidence to cover every move that is made. Confidence is one thing Britain's Kelly Holmes is short of in Atlanta. Holmes, who finished second to O'Sullivan in Norway in a personal best of 4min 01.13sec, arrived in Atlanta with hopes of chasing gold in the 800m and 1500m. But a stress fracture in her lower left leg has put her in doubt for the 800m, for which heats start on Friday, and is in a race against time to make it to the 1500m.

The reigning Olympic and world champion Hissiba Boulmerka will be back to defend her title. A recent, rare non-championship outing in Nice ended in defeat at the hands of Carla Sacramento of Portugal, although the Algerian was recovering from an illness at the time. She will not easily give up the title she won with such nationalistic pride in Barcelona.

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## Shot

Judy Oakes gave one of her finest performances, at the age of 38, to finish second to the German Astrid Kumbernuss in the European Cup. But Kumbernuss is a class above the rest.

**Records**  
World 22.63m Natalya Luchitskaya (URS) 1987  
Olympic 22.41m Iona Suprenet (ISOR) 1980  
British 19.36m Judy Oakes 1988

**1996 - best in the world**  
20.97m Astrid Kumbernuss (Ger)  
19.87m Krysztyna Zabawska (Pol)  
19.87m Krysztyna Zabawska (Pol)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
19.01m Judy Oakes



Kumbernuss: Favoured to keep up a long unbeaten run

**First three forecast**  
1. Kumbernuss  
2. Zhong (Chn)  
3. Khusidzhina

## Discus

Ellina Zvereva of Belarus heads the rankings this year but the German like Wyludde, who casts a giant shadow over this event, is just behind her and they will put on a frantic struggle for gold.

**Records**  
World 76.80m Gabriele Reinsch (GDR) 1988  
Olympic 72.30m Martina Hellmann (GDR) 1981  
British 67.48m Meg Ritchie 1981

**1996 - best in the world**  
68.62m Ellina Zvereva (Belarus)  
68.34m the Wyludde (Germany)  
67.22m Natalya Sedova (Russia)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
60.04m Jacquie McEwan



Wyludde: Queen of the discus circle will have her work cut out

**First three forecast**  
1. Zvereva  
2. Wyludde  
3. Bergmann (Nor)

## Javelin

Tessa Sanderson is breaking all sorts of records by being in Atlanta for her sixth Olympic Games but in her comeback years still has a good five metres to make up on her principal rivals.

**Records**  
World 60.00m Petra Felke (GDR) 1988  
Olympic 54.88m Petra Felke (GDR) 1988  
British 57.44m Petra Felke (GDR) 1988

**1996 - best in the world**  
59.28m Felicia Tila (Romania)  
58.72m Olesya Ochinnikova (Russia)  
57.08m Tina Hattestad (Norway)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
64.06m Tessa Sanderson  
60.12m Shelley Horroby



Sanderson: Going for a second gold at the age of 40

**First three forecast**  
1. Sanderson  
2. Tila  
3. Hattestad

## Heptathlon

Jackie Joyner-Kersey set her world record eight years ago and has yet to compete in 1996 that she can see off Ghada Shouaa, of Syria, or Denise Lewis, the Briton most likely to spring a big surprise.

**Records**  
World 7,255pts Jackie Joyner-Kersey 1988  
Olympic 6,442pts Jackie Joyner-Kersey 1988  
British 6,645pts Denise Lewis 1996

**1996 - best in the world**  
6,942 Ghada Shouaa (Syria)  
6,645 Denise Lewis (GB)  
6,626 Sabine Braun (Germany)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
6,645 Denise Lewis (GB)



Lewis: Ranked second in the world and an athlete on the up

**First three forecast**  
1. Shouaa  
2. Lewis  
3. Braun

## 10km walk

Yelena Nikolayeva, of Russia, set a world record on the track this year. Kerry Saxby-Jones, of Australia, has a good chance of preventing a clean sweep by walkers from the former Soviet Union.

**Records**  
World 41:04 Yelena Nikolayeva (Russia) 1996  
Olympic 44:32 Chen Yueling (China) 1992  
British 45:42 Lisa Langford 1987

**1996 - best times in the world**  
41:04 Yelena Nikolayeva (Russia)  
41:21 Yelena Gnashova (Russia)  
41:47 Kerry Saxby-Jones (Australia)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
47:19 Vicky Lupton



Saxby-Jones: Third-fastest in the world this year

**First three forecast**  
1. Nikolayeva  
2. Hongman (China)  
3. Saxby-Jones

## 4 x 100m relay

The US quartet have speed to burn in the grand American tradition, and only poor baton-changing will let in Russia or Germany with a chance. The British quartet will have to excel themselves to progress beyond the semi-finals.

**Records**  
World 43.37 GDR 1985  
Olympic 41.60 GDR 1980  
British 42.43 Great Britain 1980

**1996 - best times in the world**  
42.34 United States  
42.55 Russia  
42.59 Germany

**1996 - bests by British team**  
44.07 Great Britain



Torrence and the US relay team aim to make the track their own

**First three forecast**  
1. United States  
2. Russia  
3. Germany

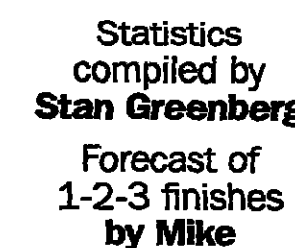
## 4 x 400m relay

Great Britain do not have the squad to repeat their recent medal form in big championships. The home side look best, with strength in depth offered by their two of crack 400m hurdlers.

**Records**  
World 3:15.17 Soviet Union 1988  
Olympic 3:15.11 Soviet Union 1988  
British 3:22.01 Great Britain 1991

**1996 - best times in the world**  
3:26.19 Germany  
3:27.50 United States  
3:27.74 Ukraine

**1996 - bests by British team**  
3:27.74 Ukraine



Torrence and the US relay team aim to make the track their own

**First three forecast**  
1. United States  
2. Russia  
3. Germany

## 400m hurdles

Injury has left Sally Gunnell nearly two seconds off her best. She is short of time to be fit to defend her title properly, and even a bronze medal would be a triumph. Americans could fill the rostrum.

**Records**  
World 1:29.61 Kim Bazen (US) 1995  
Olympic 1:30.17 Debbie Flintoff-King (Aust) 1988  
British 1:32.74 Sally Gunnell 1988

**1996 - best times in the world**  
1:30.33 Torja Bultud-Bailey (US)  
1:30.33 Kim Bazen (US)  
1:30.33 Sandra Farmer-Patrick (US)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
1:34.65 Sally Gunnell



Gunnell: The champion faces an uphill task to be fit on the day

**First three forecast**  
1. Bultud-Bailey  
2. Bazen  
3. Gunnell

## High Jump

Nine years after setting her world record, Stefka Kostadinova of Bulgaria is back near her best and is expected to beat the ex-Romanian world indoor champion Anna Asaftei.

**Records**  
World 2.09m Stefka Kostadinova (Bul) 1987  
Olympic 2.03m Galina Yatcheva (Bul) 1988  
British 1.95m Dana Davies 1982

**1996 - best in the world**  
2.03m Stefka Kostadinova (Bul)  
2.03m Galina Yatcheva (Bul)  
2.03m Anna Asaftei (Romania)

**1996 - bests by British team**  
1.92m Dana Davies



Kostadinova: Chasing first Olympic title after 10 years at the top

**First three forecast**  
1. Kostadinova  
2. Asaftei (Rom)  
3. Yatcheva (Bul



# PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



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Hungarian GP August 11  
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Japanese GP October 13

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Even though the grand prix season is underway, it is not too late to join in: pit your wits against other enthusiasts and you could win our overall 1996 champion's prize, a drive in a Formula One car plus additional prizes for each race.

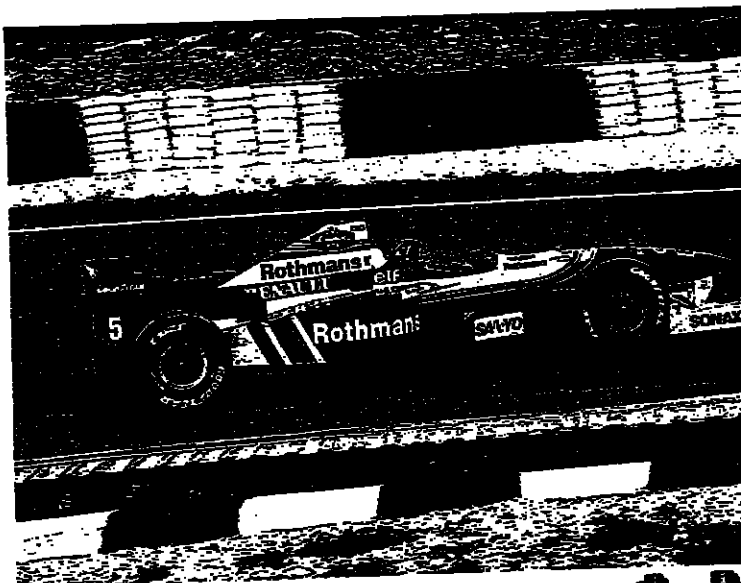
Your team must comprise three drivers, a chassis and an engine; your budget is £40 million. Make your selections from the grand prix shopping list printed below; the only restriction is that your third driver must come from the £1 million category.

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**HOW YOU SCORE**  
Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers.

All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.
- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.
- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.
- If your driver makes the quickest pitstop (from the entry of the pitlane to the exit) you gain five points.
- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.
- If your driver receives a stop/go penalty, you lose five points.
- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.
- The Independent will name a Driver of the Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.
- Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.
- Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.
- Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.
- Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.



### GERMAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the German Grand Prix will win a trip for two to the Belgian Grand Prix. Our winner and partner will spend a two-night break in Brussels over the August Bank Holiday weekend. On Sunday you will be taken to the Spa circuit where you can watch all the action from your grandstand seats.

### DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

### HOW TO ENTER

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship?

To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods. Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and you give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number. Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

### CHECKING YOUR SCORE

You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

### Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.
2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.
3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.
4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.
5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.
6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.
7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.
8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.
9. For lost PIN numbers, call 0891 891 808. Helpline: 01275 344183.
10. The Top 50 Teams Line, lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2 pm on the Monday following a race.

## Make your selection from the Grand Prix

### DRIVERS

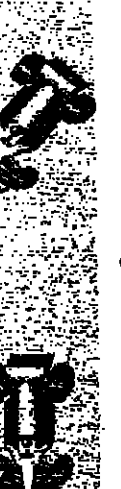
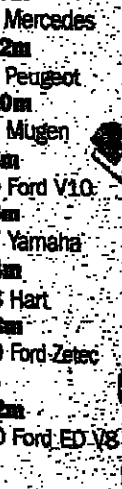
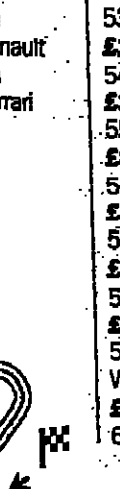
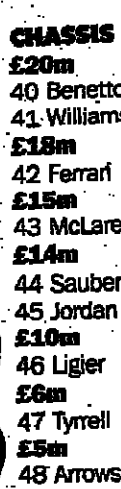
£25m  
1 M. Schumacher  
£23m  
2 J. Alesi  
3 D. Hill  
£20m  
4 G. Berger  
£18m  
5 D. Coulthard  
6 E. Irvine  
7 J. Villeneuve  
£15m  
8 M. Hakkinen  
9 M. H. Frentzen  
£13m  
10 M. Brundis  
11 R. Barrichello

### CHASSIS

£3m  
12 J. Herbert  
£2m  
13 M. Salo  
£1m  
14 P. Larri  
£4m  
15 P. Dintz  
16 U. Katayama  
17 J. Verstappen  
18 G. Paris  
£5m  
19 L. Badoer  
20 R. Hosokawa  
21 A. Montanari  
£2m  
22 G. Fisichella  
23 V. Sospiro  
24 T. Martnez

### ENGINES

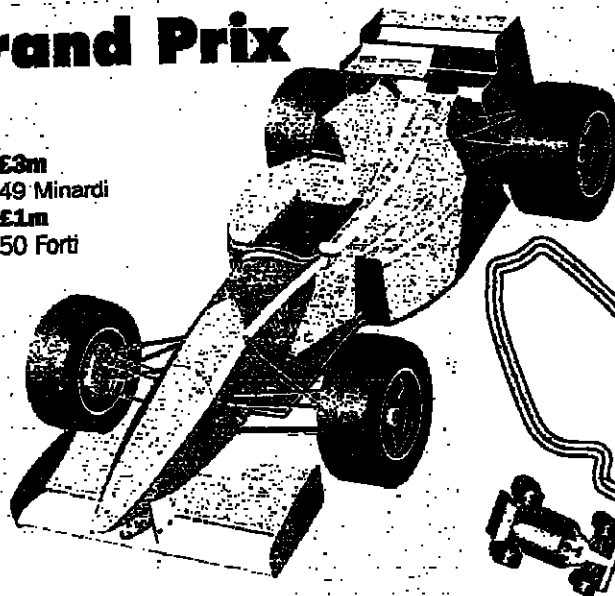
£3m  
25 F. Lagorce  
26 H. Noda  
27 J. Inoue  
£1m  
28 M. Blondell  
29 J. C. Boulton  
30 K. Brack  
31 K. Burt  
32 E. Collard  
33 N. Fontana  
34 D. Franchitti  
35 N. Larini  
36 J. Magnussen  
37 A. Prost  
38 G. Tarquini  
39 K. Wendlinger  
40 Benetton  
41 Williams  
£18m  
42 Ferrari  
£15m  
43 McLaren  
£14m  
44 Sauber  
45 Jordan  
£10m  
46 Ligier  
£8m  
47 Tyrrell  
£5m  
48 Arrows



## Shopping List

ENGINE  
£26m  
51 Renault  
£18m  
52 Ferrari

£15m  
53 Mercedes  
£12m  
54 Peugeot  
£10m  
55 Mugen  
£8m  
56 Ford V10  
£6m  
57 Yamaha  
£4m  
58 Hart  
£2m  
59 Ford Zetec  
V8  
£2m  
60 Ford ED V8



THE SPA GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

**DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805 • TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806 • RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS: 0891 891 807**

For th  
SO YOU  
WANT TO...  
BUY A  
MOUNTAIN  
BIKE



**Hidden Personality**  
In between, there have been three Commonwealth titles, European Cup, World Cup and Olympic golds. These Games will be his sixth, a record for a British competitor.

# playing the game 9

## For the cyclists who relish uphill battles

### SO YOU WANT TO... BUY A MOUNTAIN BIKE

By Tom Chesshyre

Mountain biking began in California in the mid-Seventies. A group of cyclists who enjoyed cruising up and down beach promenades on souped-up home-made bikes - with extra long handlebars and fluorescent-coloured frames - decided they were bored with all the pooping.

They saw beach-bum surfers getting a kick out of riding big "breakers" and wanted some excitement (and an adrenalin rush) of their own. So they took to the hills, particularly those in northern California, which had numerous off-beat tracks to whizz down. But a problem soon presented itself: their bikes were not up to bumps, rocks and uncovered roots - bits kept falling off. So they began to make adjustments to toughen up the frames and the wheels of their road bikes.

Twenty years on, mountain biking has grown into big business beyond the wildest dreams of those first few experimental riders. Last year, 2 million bikes were sold in Britain, of which 95 per cent were mountain bikes. Compare that with mountain bike sales a decade ago - which numbered just a few thousand or so each year - and the rapid growth of the sport has been nothing short of phenomenal.

"They've become so popular because you can take them almost anywhere," said Bruce Johnson, of British Mountain Biking, which is affiliated to the British Cycling Federation (BCF). "Traditional bikes can normally only withstand riding on roads while mountain bikes can go on dirt tracks, old tow-paths, hills, virtually anything."

"The success is also down to the recent trend towards healthy outdoor living as well as the fact that anyone from about the age of 12 to 70 can ride them. Families can hitch bikes on to roof-racks and can go off on riding holidays together - and they don't have to stick to boring roads."

Most mountain bikes, which range in price from as little as £150 for basic models to up to £3,000 or so, are bought by those who want to go on leisurely weekend rides. However, there are now regular weekend competitions up and down the country for the more serious bikers: race-standard bikes begin at around £350. Most races, which are often broken down into age categories, are organised by local bike shops or centrally by the BCF.

British mountain bikers are considered - along with the Americans and the French - as among the best in the world. Caroline Alexander won the European Championships for Britain last year and is taking part in the Atlanta Olympics, the first time mountain biking has been included in the Games (another indication of its popularity). Alexander is aware of the challenge Atlanta will present. "You're close to your limit for two-hours-plus the hammer goes down from the gun and you're at your maximum heart rate all the way. It's one of the toughest sports. Only cross-country skiing and marathon running can compare with it."

There is also a whole new mountain biking subculture. In rather the same way snowboarders have broken away from mainstream skiers and developed their own alternative "grunge-style" clothing on the slopes, the trendiest mountain bikers dress totally differently from traditional cyclists.

Instead of wearing the type of skin-tight Spandex worn by Tour de France riders, the look is baggy shorts or jeans; T-shirts; backwards baseball caps or wool hats. These mountain bikers tend not to enter competitions: they would rather - in the spirit of the Californian pioneers - head off for the hills and find a new, even more exciting track. For any rider keen on making it a reg-



Trail blazers: Mountain bikers break from the start of an off-road race at Eastnor Castle, near Malvern, on Sunday, where the spectators also brought their own wheels (below). Photographs: Sarah Bancroft

ular pursuit, the most important accessory is a safety-approved helmet - you will fall off, no matter your skill level.

Bikes these days are technologically advanced: titanium frames, front and back suspension, disc brakes and specially designed tyre treads to deal with different terrains and weather conditions.

But it can all get a little bit confusing for the beginner, especially when brochures explaining the various features slip into (almost incomprehensible) biking jargon: "Load-distributing spacers", "butterfly gaskets", "weld heads", "rim sidewalls" and "four-bar linkage full-suspension". One brochure described its bike frames as having "oval-ised seatstays for durability and torsional rigidity so they resist brake flex, yet include taper gauge butting to shave weight and absorb shock".

Several mountain biking magazines have sprouted up recently, and run regular features helping to decipher the jargon and explain the pros and cons of the latest innovations. They tend to be very much consumer-led, concentrating on what bikes are the best value for money.

So what is the best way to go about buying a mountain bike? Bruce Johnson had some advice: "Be very careful about mail order catalogues. Sometimes bikes that are described as 'mountain bikes' aren't strong enough for proper hill cycling. The best thing to do is to go to your local shop and explain whether you intend to use the bike for casual excursions or if you are going to go on tough tracks and bash it about. It's important to get a bike that suits you."

### Drop chains, get a new look out there and a mountain bike

Mountain biking is a sport that has exploded in popularity in recent years. It's a sport that's accessible to almost anyone, and it's a sport that's fun. If you're looking for a new hobby, mountain biking is a great choice. It's a sport that's accessible to almost anyone, and it's a sport that's fun. If you're looking for a new hobby, mountain biking is a great choice.

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### Where to make contacts

**Organisations**  
British Cycling Federation  
National Cycling Centre  
Stewart Street  
Manchester, M11 4DQ  
Telephone 0161-230 2301

**Cycling Touring Club**  
69 West Row  
Godalming, Surrey GU7 3HS  
Telephone 01483 417217

**Publications**  
Mountain Biking UK  
80 Woodstock Street  
Bristol, BS1 2BN  
Telephone 01225 442244

**Cycling Weekly**  
6th Floor  
King's Reach Tower  
Stamford Street  
London, SE1 9LS  
Telephone 0171-261 5588

**Cycling Today**  
Stonehart Sports Magazines Ltd  
67 Goswell Road  
London, EC1V 7BN  
Telephone 0171-410 9410

### JUST THE TICKET: a weekly guide to what's on where for the spectator

#### This week

**Today's fixtures (except racing):** Page 11.  
**CRICKET:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): Glamorgan v Essex (1st Test, 1st day).  
**FOOTBALL:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): Arsenal v Manchester United (Premier League).  
**RUGBY LEAGUE:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): Wigan v Hull (Super League).  
**RUGBY UNION:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): Wales v France (Six Nations).  
**SWIMMING:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): England v Australia (Commonwealth Games).  
**TABLE TENNIS:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): China v South Korea (Commonwealth Games).  
**WRESTLING:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): USA v Russia (Commonwealth Games).  
**GYMNASIUM:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): USA v Russia (Commonwealth Games).  
**ARTS:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): Various events at the Royal Opera House and the National Theatre.

#### PICK OF THE WEEKEND

**SUNDAY Darts**  
Webster's World Matchplay 1996  
Blackpool  
From this Sunday until Saturday 3 August 1996 the Webster's Bitter World Matchplay Tournament will be held in Blackpool and will see all the top names in darts competing to secure a share of the £78,000 prize fund.  
For the first time in this event amateur players will also have the chance to compete in this prestigious competition. Over 2,000 pubs and clubs across Britain have been taking part in the knock-out tournament. The first eight will go through to the preliminary round of the World Matchplay to gain the chance to compete against household names such as Dennis Priestley, Eric Bristow and the reigning World Champion, Phil Taylor.  
The top seeds, Phil Taylor and Dennis Priestley, have played each other twice this year. After losing to the champion twice, Priestley will be hoping to make it third time lucky in Blackpool if they meet in the final once more.  
How to get there: Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens, Church Street, Blackpool. Follow the basic directions to the centre of Blackpool: the Winter Gardens are situated in the centre of the town just behind the Tower. Tickets for the event are priced at £8 for adults and £3 for concessions. All tickets for the final on Saturday 3 August are priced at £8. Telephone the Winter Gardens on 01263 27788 for further information about directions, admission prices and starting times.

**Next week**  
**CRICKET:** Tomorrow (first day of five, including Sunday): Glamorgan v Essex (1st Test, 1st day).  
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**From Mr F Pearson**  
Sir: I must admit that I am not a keen sports fan at the best of times, but the Olympics has stirred sensations of great boredom in me. Hundreds of finely tuned, occasionally drug-enhanced competitors participating in events that are decided in fractions of a second have taken away any possible thrill.  
As a remedy, I suggest that in future Olympic Games the competitors be selected by a random process from the general public, eight weeks before the Games commence (to give them a chance to train). I believe even mundane events - such as the pole vault, gymnastics and synchronised swimming - would be given a new lease of life.  
FENNER PEARSON  
Cumbria

**From Mr P Phillips**  
Sir: I read with interest the article written by David Llewellyn, "Clubs plans legal action over ban". The arrogant attitude of the RFU over the last few months, and indeed the senior clubs, is breath-taking. They have agreed with a broadcaster with only one aim in mind - to secure the largest pot for the very few.  
It was the choice of the senior clubs to go professional. It was the choice of the RFU to accept the BSkyB deal without taking into account the rich heritage that rugby has developed. I have taught and been involved in rugby in schools and clubs for many years and cannot reconcile myself to having to

**SPORTS LETTERS**  
pay to see the Five Nations, particularly when I have sacrificed many weekends and evenings over many years developing the game locally for the greater good. Excellence in sport is not produced by wealth. Excellence in any sport is a blend of talent, expertise and the will to achieve greatness.  
I believe the senior clubs have panicked after a poor performance in the World Cup and decided money is the solution. This is nonsense. We possess great talent in this country and could be the best. We have to consider our strengths and play to them rather than emulating the southern hemisphere as we are often told to do by the RFU through various training courses. It is about time we had inspired coaches coming to the fore rather than retired internationals swanning round the country studying videos of how marvellous the New Zealanders play.  
PETER PHILLIPS  
Tunbridge Wells

Letters should be marked "For publication" and contain daytime and evening telephone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL. Fax: 0171 293 2594.

Compiled by Alistair Morgan







# Warrington pin £1.35m price tag on Harris

## Rugby League

Alex Murphy, the Warrington coach, fears Iestyn Harris has been tempted into leaving the club for a possible world record £1.35m fee by "other forces" promising him riches elsewhere.

Harris, who celebrated his 20th birthday last month, has been the subject of speculation recently linking him with a move to several union clubs, including Saracens, Cardiff and Llanelli.

The previous record fee was £250,000 plus two players which St Helens paid Bradford for Paul

Newlove last season. The deal was thought to be worth £500,000.

Harris, a Welsh international, was transfer-listed by Wire yesterday after he asked for a move, with Murphy reluctantly admitting: "We are very disappointed but he has the rugby world at his feet and we feel our valuation is realistic."

"It has never been our policy to stand in the way of unsettled players - but he won't be moving unless a club comes up with the money we are requesting."

"We believe that there have

been other forces involved - outside our control. People have been speaking to him, obviously realising what a talent he is and obviously unsettling the kid. Maybe that's had some effect. It will be very, very interesting when all this breaks down to see which club he goes to - and what code he goes to," added Murphy.

"Things started going amiss when he went back to the valleys, so you can read into that what you want. As soon as he started playing back in Wales he started getting little bits of news from the media and things

like that, and things started going a little bit rocky."

Another Welshman, Scott Gibbs, is set to turn his back on the Super League leaders, St Helens, and return to rugby union. Llanelli, Cardiff and one of Gibbs' former clubs, Swansea, are putting firm offers together to persuade Gibbs to release the Welsh international. But St Helens are adamant they will not sell for less than £200,000.

"There has been renewed interest from Wales, but we will only let Scott go at the right price," the Saints chief executive, David Howes, said. "He has told us he'd prefer to return to union in Wales. We will be reluctant to let him go because he is a top player," he said.

Richmond pulled out of the bidding for Gibbs at £170,000 and now hope to sign the former Neath and Warrington centre, Allan Bateman, from the Australian side Cronulla on a three-year contract. Negotiations are at an advanced stage, but Cronulla are determined to hang on to Bateman until September. "There is no way we're going back before then as we are on target for a play-off place and

The Central Park club have agreed to release him from his four-year contract despite their injury crisis. Northampton will pay a fee of £80,000 and Wigan are expected to use the cash to sign a prop forward.

Richard Hennessey, Warrington's New Zealand winger, has been referred to tomorrow's Rugby Football League's disciplinary committee meeting by the executive committee. They made the decision after viewing a video of the fighting that broke out in the second half of Saturday's match between Warrington and Bradford.

The imminent return of Gibbs and Bateman is good news for the Welsh national team and both have been earmarked for £30,000 international-squad contracts.

The former Western Samoa rugby union international Shem Tatupu is switching back to the 15-a-side code and joining Northampton after failing to break into the Wigan first team since turning professional last September.

The Central Park club have agreed to release him from his four-year contract despite their injury crisis. Northampton will pay a fee of £80,000 and Wigan are expected to use the cash to sign a prop forward.

## League breaks over the border

International rugby league comes to Scotland for the first time in 85 years next month. Scotland and Ireland will meet at Partick Thistle's Firhill ground on Tuesday 6 August.

It is only the third league international to be played north of the border, with the previous two in 1909 and 1911. However, the Rugby Football League is hoping the match can ultimately pave the way towards an eventual Five Nations Championship including England, Wales, France, Ireland and the Scots.

"This will be a ground-breaking venture and hope we can attract a reasonable crowd," said Graeme Thompson, the RFL's recently-appointed development officer for Scotland.

Scotland's team will be made up of players from Super League clubs and students. Leeds' Alan Thit, the former Scotland rugby union cap, could be the star attraction as captain of the home side.

The line-ups will be coached by the men who led them through the Halifax Emerging Nations World Cup - George Fairbairn of Scotland and Terry Flanagan of Ireland. The two teams met in Dublin a year ago with Ireland winning 26-22.

The problems rugby league will encounter in trying to get a foothold in Scotland have already become apparent in attempts to schedule this match.

It was to have been played on Wednesday 7 August, but was scrapped because it clashed with Rangers' game against Russia's Alania Vladikavkaz, in the preliminary round of the Champions' League. However, if Celtic are drawn at home for the first leg of the UEFA Cup preliminary round, which is due to be played on 6 August, then the rugby league game will very much play second fiddle.

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# Ferguson close to signing Cruyff

## Football

ALAN NIXON

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, flew to Barcelona yesterday to set up the surprise £1.5m signing of the unhappy Dutch international, Jordi Cruyff.

Ferguson hopes to do a quick deal with his old friend Bobby Robson, the new chief of Nou Camp, for the versatile young attacker whose father, Johan, was sacked by the club at the end of last season.

The blond Cruyff can play right or left wing or even through the middle and would strengthen the United squad for the Champions' League campaign if he arrives, as expected, this week.

Cruyff made it clear he wanted out when his father was dismissed and was immediately linked with Ruud Gullit's Chelsea. He has been in talks with Barcelona about buying out his own contract and his sale will

save them from any further embarrassment with his famous family.

Ferguson flew to Barcelona to try to tie up the deal swiftly and Robson's club will allow Cruyff to go quite cheaply by today's standards.

Cruyff has two years of his contract left and United will compensate Barcelona for that and offer the player at least a three-year deal at Old Trafford.

The signing is a big surprise, with Ferguson strongly linked with Cruyff's team-mate Miguel Angel Nadal, but the Dutchman's ability and value proved too much for Ferguson to resist.

Elsewhere the influx of foreign talent continued, with Tottenham signing the Danish international Allan Nielsen from Brondby for £1.65m, but Ron Noades, the Palace chairman, is insisting on a fee which is likely to be double that.

Martyn's signature could spell the end of Neville Southall's illustrious career at Goodison Park. The Welsh goalkeeper's new deal included a clause which enables him to leave the club at a month's notice if a successor was signed.

Peter Reid, a former team-mate of Southall's at Everton and now manager of Sunderland, is making a move for £1m-rated Martignes striker Joël Tchihi, the captain of the Ivory Coast national side. Tchihi flew into Wear-side from France yesterday and may make a debut as a trialist against Steaua Bucharest at Roker Park tonight. The 30-year-old has been capped over 60 times for the Ivory Coast and was outstanding in last season's African Nations' Cup.

Gianluca Vialli, the former Juventus player, may make his long-awaited debut for Chelsea alongside his player-manager, Raul Gullit, at Plymouth tonight. Vialli sat on the bench as a spectator while Chelsea lost 2-1 at Argyle's Devon neighbours, Exeter, on Monday.

Scott Oakes, the Luton midfielder, is set to become Sheffield Wednesday's third signing of the summer after a trial at Hillsborough. The 27-year-old former David Pleat, captain, and David Lloyd, coach, out of final preparations.

The pair were subpoenaed to appear at the High Court yesterday but both failed to reach the witness stand. But they have been called back for today by Imran's counsel, Sir George Crampton QC, when England complete their net sessions for the first Test and are likely to be absent, despite having practice put back to

mid-morning because the team have a breakfast appointment with the Prime Minister.

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Waqar Younis comes through a test on his injured hamstring in the nets at Lord's yesterday

Photograph: AP

# Court case disrupts England plans

## Cricket

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rozen

# Turkey's flame lit by 'The Greatest'

At the Turkish hospitality house in Atlanta on Monday, they were swapping stories about Naim Suleymanoglu when the little man walked in. Applause broke out and people pressed forward to shake his strong hand, planting kisses on his cheeks. "Naim, Naim" they chanted.

Suleymanoglu smiled, not in a shy way because he has grown used to fame, to being known as the greatest weightlifter in history, a national hero since winning his first Olympic title in Seoul eight years ago.

But even for the 28-year-old tiny lifter they call "Pocket Hercules" this was something special. A third gold medal. De-light showed in bright eyes that are set in boyish features and he raised stubby arms in triumph.

Earlier, at the Georgia World Congress Centre he could not bear to watch when his greatest rival, Valerios Leonidis, returned for one last effort on the lifting platform.

The Greek had a world record weight at his feet and a gold medal within his grasp. Back in the warm-up room, Suleymanoglu turned his back and stared at the wall of a cubicle. Hundreds of Turkish supporters who began cheering and singing 35 minutes before the start of competition in the 64kg (141lb) class started went silent.

Within the space of little more than five minutes, three world records had been broken. Suleymanoglu had gone ahead with a lift of 187.5kg (413lb) in the clean-and-jerk almost three times his bodyweight, forcing Leonidis to go for 190kg (418lb) more than he had ever attempted in practice.

As Leonidis rubbed his hands along the bar and drew a deep breath, lost in concentration, there was barely a murmur from the 5,000 present. Expiring air, Leonidis heaved the weight up and squatted. Unable to rise from there, he let it fall to the mat. Suleymanoglu had an unprecedented third gold medal and a great cheer went up from the Turkish contingent. "You have just witnessed the greatest weightlifting competition in history," the announcer, Lynn Jones, said.

Backstage, Suleymanoglu, the last to know he had won, fell into the arms of his coach and team officials.

Great sympathy was felt generally for Leonidis, but Su-



KEN JONES at the Olympics

leymanoğlu had again proved the extent of his mental toughness in a sport that carries historical fascination with human strength.

Suleymanoglu has come a long way. An ethnic Turk born to a desperately poor family in Kircali, Bulgaria, he defected in 1986 after coming up against government attempts to eliminate Turkish culture. After almost a year of diplomatic wrangling that followed his disappearance, Turkey paid Bulgaria \$1m (£600,000) so that he could represent them in the 1988 Games.

A second gold in Barcelona four years ago meant that Suleymanoglu was established as the leading figure in Turkish sport long before his latest tri-

umph. A member of the Turkish delegation, Topay Bayazit said: "Naim is as big in Turkey as footballers are in other countries. For us he is like Michael Jordan in the United States. No doors are closed to him. I don't think he would be asked to pay in restaurants. No policeman would give him a ticket for speeding. There is a great deal of affection for him."

On Monday, what came down to a contest between Suleymanoglu and Leonidis was heightened by the fragile relations that exist between Turkey and Greece. To the credit of both men, age-old animosity was submerged beneath an encouraging manifestation of the true Olympic spirit.

Because Leonidis held the tiebreak advantage of weighing in lighter, another supreme effort was required of Suleymanoglu when the Greek equalled the new record of 185kg in the clean and jerk. He came to the platform, a curiously shaped figure with powerful thighs and arms out of proportion to his body. Up went the weight, up again and then a shout of triumph as he let go. Turning towards where his supporters stood cheering, he threw a punch at the air and

swaggered from the stage. "Magnificent," somebody said, "absolutely magnificent."

On the podium afterwards, Suleymanoglu was a picture of serenity, a third gold hanging around a slab of neck muscles, a bouquet clutched in his right hand.

The greatest weightlifter in history? That's for others to decide, he said. "I am human. Everybody makes failure. Everyone tries to be a champion." Rewards for this latest triumph? Suleymanoglu smiled, anticipating perhaps further financial gifts from a grateful government.

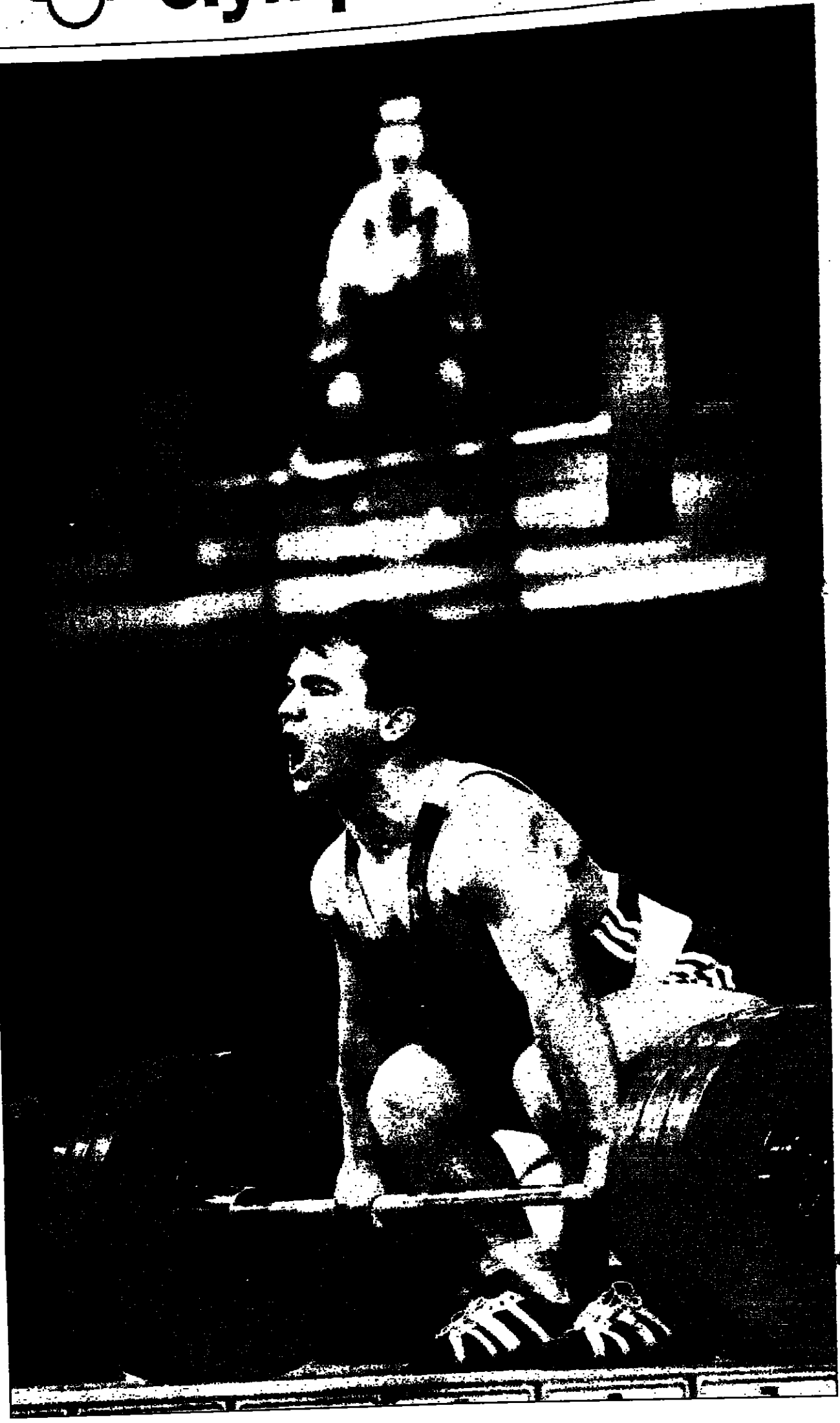
Suleymanoglu had intended this to be his last Games and it is doubtful whether he will compete in Sydney four years from now but he will go on lifting. "It is my life," he said, "the only thing I have known."

For Leonidis, there was the realisation of destiny. "I felt I could beat him," he said. "I felt that I could make that lift but it wasn't written. When you compete against this man you have always to compete at world record levels."

When the words were translated for Suleymanoglu he nodded in appreciation. Applause followed him from the room.



Lifting a nation: Naim Suleymanoglu (right) is a picture of concentration as he prepares to clean and jerk a world record of 187.5kg (413lb) and earn both his third gold medal and the continuing adulation of his fellow Turks (above) Photographs: David Ashdown



## McGregor primed for hot pursuit

Tom Wyeth meets a Yorkshire-born cyclist who did not mount a bike until she was 29 but will be chasing gold on Sunday

Chris Brasher in Melbourne, Don Thompson in Rome, Bob Braithwaite in Mexico. The hockey team not good enough for an invite but good enough for a bronze at Los Angeles. Mike McIntyre and Bryn Vaile tacking into history at Pusan, the Searle brothers drowning Italian dreams at Banyoles. There's usually a shock somewhere in the Olympics.

Yvonne McGregor has gone almost unnoticed at these Games. While Christie snubs and Guannell anguishes and Redgrave roars on, McGregor avoids the headlines, indeed almost misses a mention. Such are the media demands on the 33-year-old from Bradford that preparation for the Games has been almost uninterrupted.

That's surprising, for McGregor's is a compelling tale. She only sat seriously on a racing bike at the age of 29 and, on Sunday, when the individual pursuit final takes place at Stone Mountain Park, it would not be outrageous to find her winning it.

On the face of it, McGregor looks as if she has bounced, like a beanbag, from sport to sport, but that's only half the truth. The cross-country running at

school and county level, the fell running, the triathlon and the world one-hour record last year all tapped her richest resource, her remarkable aerobic power.

The fell running career first took her to a world stage: in 1989 she finished eighth in the world championships, four places behind Britain's top finisher, the former marathon international Sarah Rowell. A club runner since she was 12 years old, she might still be running were it not for a pair of dodgy Achilles tendons.

A switch to the triathlon gave no relief to the problem, though she was strong enough at both the running and the cycling disciplines to place 18th in the European Long Course Championships. In 1991, the year her father died, she took to the bicycle properly.

It was a short apprenticeship. In her second full season she won two bronzes at the National Road Race Championships. The following year she was national champion at 10, 50 and 100 miles, and the year after, the al-

most vertical ascent continued with a Commonwealth gold medal in the points race. "I got a lead of 50 metres on the group and they thought, 'Oh, she's nobody' and they let me go. In the end, I lapped them all and won."

McGregor had created the time to take the sport seriously by opting to work part-time at her job as a youth worker for Bradford council. Her qualifications include a degree in leisure and recreation at Ilkley



Caption - locked to grid

College, but she lists among her jobs work in a psychiatric hospital, residential care and helping the physically and mentally handicapped.

Last year, the Yorkshirewoman hauled herself into the top bracket of racers when she took the world one-hour record. If anybody questioned the merit of that record, the answer came later in the year. Twice, once at altitude in Colombia and again in France, Jeannie Longo-Ciprelli tried and failed to break the record. Longo-Ciprelli has three times won the world pursuit title and five times claimed the world road race crown. Last Sunday, she reinforced her standing as the world's greatest female cyclist when she won the Olympic road race title. But she could not break McGregor's record.

Three weeks after the record, McGregor hit a pothole in the national 10 mile and performed a somersault that might have got her into the gymnastics team here except that she fractured her collarbone and scapula in the process. Hard work on the turbo (static bike) put her in some sort of shape for the world championships, but her experience in Bogota was not sweet. "I missed out on the semi-final by five-hundredths of a second. I re-

ally believed I could come back with a medal and I was desperately disappointed," she said.

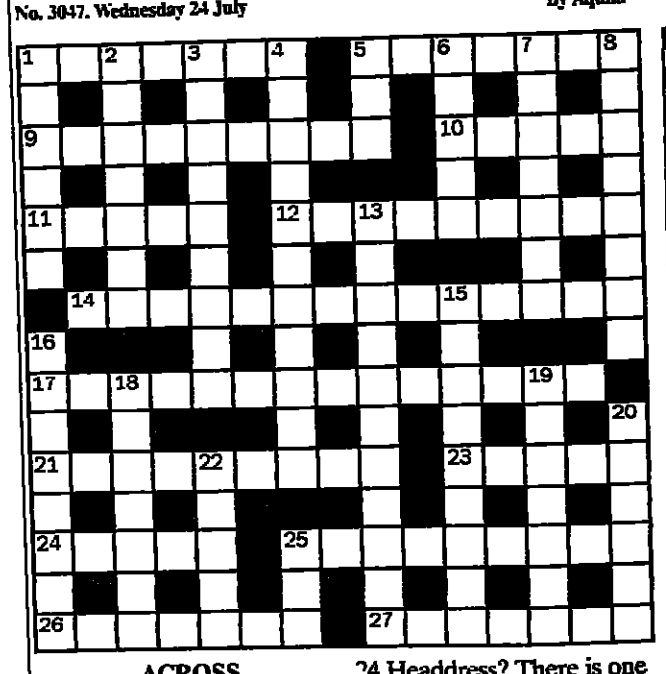
McGregor has prepared for the Games assiduously. Now part of North Wirral Velo (Chris Boardman's club), she is being monitored by Boardman's physiologist, Peter Keen.

Using the test chamber at Eastbourne, where Keen works, they carried out acclimatisation trials before Atlanta. The controls were set to 34 degrees of heat with 90 per cent humidity. Cycling on rollers in the chamber, she took her body core temperature up to 40.3C and, in one hour, lost 2.7 litres in sweat. The results pleased her. "I'm a good sweater," she said, "and that's important. According to Peter, I'm fairly heat resistant."

The pursuit form book is well documented: she lists the American Rebecca Twigg, the Italian Antonella Bellutti and the Frenchwoman Marion Clignet as the obstacles. At the national championships this year, McGregor did the second and third-fastest pursuit times in history, so she knows her own standing, too.

"I'll probably be shaking like a leaf when I get there," she admitted. "But it's all right to be like that. Chris [Boardman] said that he was almost physically sick before the ride in Barcelona." And for Boardman, the result couldn't have been better.

### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



- 1 Fruit wine fashionable? (7)  
5 Ship has run out of ribbon (7)  
9 A codeword encrypted in natural material (9)  
10 Unbending soldier in free environment (5)  
11 Henry in pleasant corner (5)  
12 Polar ship's bearing? (9)  
14 Romance of Tory, for example, following fortune (8,6)  
17 Vested minister out for entertainment (14)  
21 Where I do canal trip around opening of Eil? (9)  
23 Borodin trombone part carries a short lead-in (5)
- 24 Headdress? There is one in Irish royal seat! (5)  
25 Provisional fashion-gown (9)  
26 Attendant in a mess, placing fishpond next to a road (7)  
27 Abandons rules that include society (7)
- DOWN  
1 Modern centre to be developed (6)  
2 Cocktail taken only in combination (7)  
3 Nijinsky's final parts that govern lengths of bow? (9)  
4 Action in open court is disturbed (11)  
5 Second notice is blue (3)  
6 Mistake of losing head in panic (5)

FOUR LETTERS  
DOWN  
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### Today's hidden personality

After a spell on the charity circuit, starring in the pantomime Cinderella, among other shows, Tessa Sanderson returns to the world stage in Atlanta to throw for Britain in the javelin. Gold medalist at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, Sanderson came out of retirement in May after a break of four years. Now 40, Sanderson has the benefit of experience to aid her medal quest.

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24 JUL 1996



# Frozen embryos: the race for a new ethical code

What should we do with the 3,300 frozen embryos due to perish on 1 August? The law says that these spare embryos, created for couples undergoing IVF treatment, should be destroyed after five years unless the couple want them preserved for a further five years. David Alton, the "pro-Life" MP predictably takes a different view: he wants these "orphans" to be put up for adoption. It depends whether we see them as human beings, or as property, say the philosophers. Most of us, however, don't regard frozen embryos as either one or the other. We would be alarmed at the notion that parents were free to sell or exchange their embryos in a free market. But we are even more unwilling to accord these embryos the same rights as an infant, and to accept the same obligation to protect them until a vacant womb can be found.

Frozen embryos are a new and strange phenomenon, made possible by rapid advances in medical science. It isn't surprising then, that they don't fit neatly into our existing moral categories. Nor is it an area where the state can easily pronounce. Working out the appropriate ethical response to new and complex circumstances can't be done quickly by ethics committees, or by MPs arguing at Westminster. Instead, thousands of couples need to make their own moral decisions as they confront the dilemmas afresh. Out on

the frontier of medical ethics, we muddle through, following our instincts, making mistakes we regret, and finally, gradually building a consensus.

But as we feel our way, the legal framework is extremely important. In the case of the frozen embryos, as with IVF for ageing mothers and countless other fertility dilemmas, most of the decisions should be made in agreement between the individual parents and doctors involved. But the state can't opt out altogether. For a start, patients need to be sure that the rules they agreed to will be strictly abided by and enforced. Professionals may well want guidance about what the community as a whole will accept.

So when it comes to these particular frozen embryos we should follow the rules. When couples consented to IVF treatment five years ago, they knew that additional embryos would be created and frozen. They were assured that those embryos would not be taken for medical research, or given to another couple, without their consent. And they were told that unless they indicated otherwise, the embryos would be destroyed this year.

Ideally each couple should now decide the future of those embryos. Some will want them preserved for longer, if they are spreading a family, or saving for another round of IVF treatment. But 900 couples cannot be traced. Perhaps the HFEA should make more effort to



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL  
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2435

track them down and force them to make the decision themselves. But should they fail to do so, the procedures are clear: as the producers expect, the embryos should be destroyed.

The pro-Life lobby believes that the rules are immoral. However, it would be far more unethical to change the rules now. Imagine if we took David Alton's advice. Couples could suddenly find that against their wishes someone else was bearing and bringing up the brother or sister of their own children. That wasn't something they were warned about when they first agreed to fertility treatment. Nor is it

something they should be forced to deal with and adjust to now.

David Alton and his pro-Life supporters are actually trying to return the debate to first principles again; human life starts at conception and is sacred. Therefore unwanted day-old embryos are orphans. However, most people disagree with Alton's first principles, believing instead that there are no strict absolutes, only judgements to be made and balances to be achieved. No one will stand in the way of parents who agree with Alton (and the Vatican) braving the heartache of trying to bear every frozen embryo to term.

Heartache, it undoubtedly will be, as very few implantations of frozen embryos are successful.

But the absolutists cannot impose their views on other families who disagree. What dies with the embryo is not a child, but a couple's potential for children. We should not be distracted by old debates when new ethical dilemmas over fertility are demanding our attention all the time. One such example is the HFEA's announcement this week (lost amidst the fuss about orphans) that they planned to phase out payments to women who donate eggs. The HFEA are concerned that financial inducement is a bad reason for giving eggs, and risks undermining both respect for human life, and genuine free choice. Donation, they say, should be a gift.

The same approach applies to spare embryos; these could in principle be donated to infertile couples, but they cannot be sold to them. Our anxieties about the effects of an unregulated free market in fertility go to the heart of our reasons for legislating at all - rather than just allowing everyone to do exactly as they wish.

But here we are still feeling our way. Unless the taxpayer has a sudden change of heart and agrees to the extra cash for free fertility treatment for everyone, there will always be money involved. And some people will struggle to afford the treatment they so desperately want. Allowing couples to sell

their extra embryos in order to pay for their own treatment may not be so immoral after all. Many people may prefer to have five children - two of whom are brought up by strangers - than to have no children at all.

We don't know the answers, we probably all have different answers. But we reach better conclusions if we move forward slowly, rather than allowing ourselves to be nannied by legislators or cowed by the absolutism of Alton and his ilk.

## A slow starter

Now people are moaning that the Olympics seem boring. Could it be that we British are getting jaded? Nerve ends were stretched by England's performance in Euro 96; that was followed by the delirium of Tim Henman's Wimbledon success. Perhaps the disappointment comes from Atlanta itself. The scale and pretentiousness of the games make many events seem ridiculous. Olympic tennis and soccer are a waste of time compared to the real thing. Sports such as beach volleyball seem intended largely to titillate. Why not Olympic darts or skittles? Yet it's too soon to write Atlanta off. Athletics, still the heart and soul of the games, have yet to begin. For Britain, the games have hardly started till Linford Christie runs.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### How money buys success at school

Sir: Amid the discussion of lack of motivation among working-class children ("Middle-Class kids rule, OK", 18 July) there was no mention of simple lack of money.

My son is nearly eight years old. Over the past four years (nursery and infants school), the small circle of his friends have had a variety of extra lessons outside school, including pre-school maths, French, Greek, music, dancing, swimming and tennis. Some of these children have lessons after school on three afternoons every week. They also have access to a variety of the latest educational software on their parents' PCs.

Although I am unable to afford my son more than one extra lesson per week and a basic word-processor, he is relatively fortunate. As a graduate, I am perfectly capable of teaching primary school maths and French myself. I have no problem providing him with a supply of up-to-date educational books - our local library is steadily reducing its stocks. I can afford to take him on educational visits to museums, castles, the Tower of London etc. Many of these places now charge quite heavily, which with the addition of train fares places it quite out of reach of those on £77 per week income support or £3.50 per hour wages.

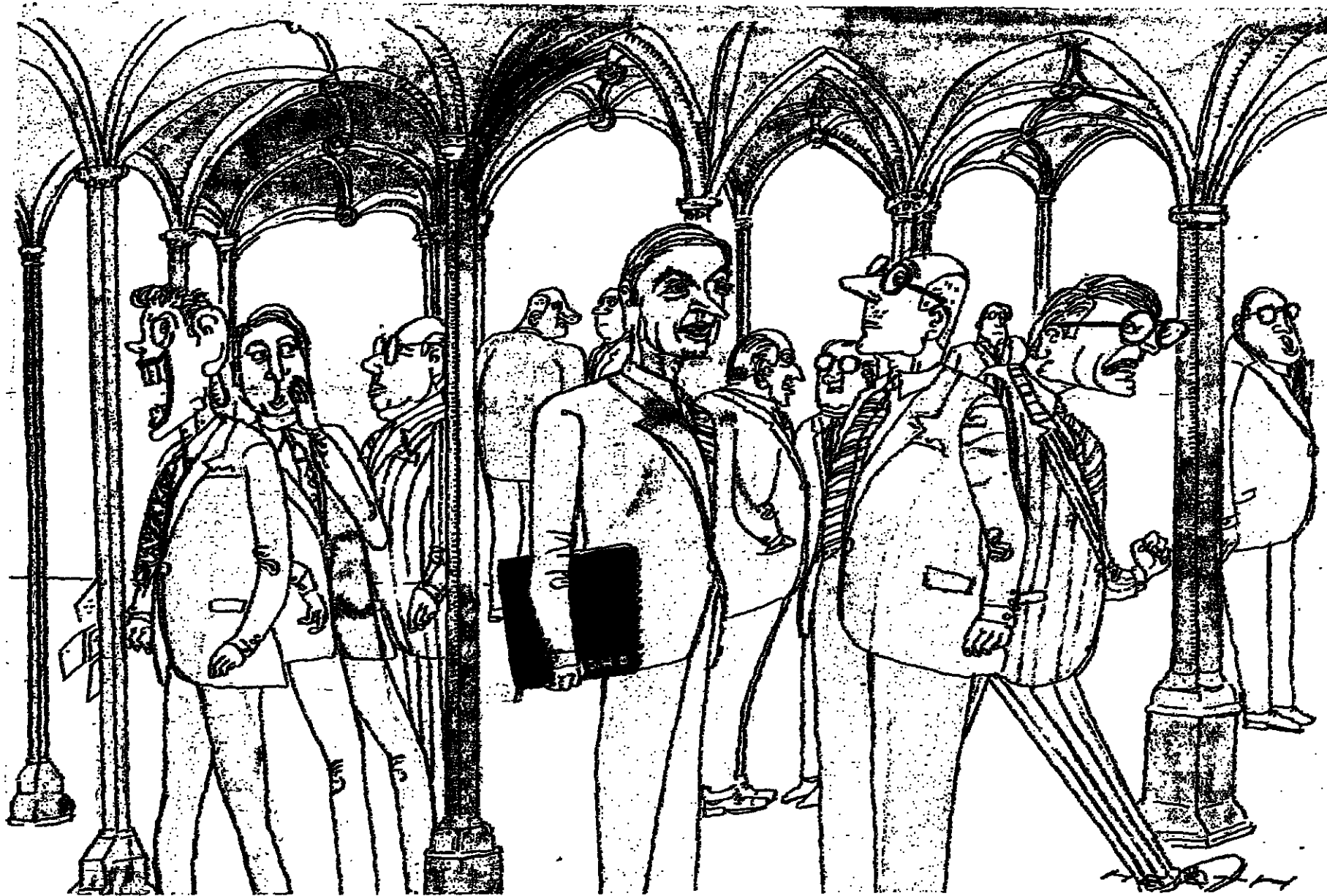
My son attends a (state) school which lies mid-way between a council estate and a middle-class residential area. There is a pool of well educated mothers who do not have to work and are therefore available to act as free high-quality classroom assistants, thus mitigating the effects of rising class sizes. The work of these better-off families through the PTA has provided the school with many extra facilities.

This is in stark contrast to a local school in a different area of town where I recently did some volunteer work. The staff are expert and dedicated, but there are not nearly enough of them, and the parents appear largely unable to help. Many of the mothers speak little or no English, and many are forced to work.

The parents of today's 11-year-olds were educated during the Sixties, when there was generous state provision for education, altruism rather than selfishness was fashionable, and it was considered both a moral duty and an investment in the future for people on good salaries to contribute generously through taxation to the education of all the nation's children.

ALISON TURNER-RUGG  
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Sir: Despite her effective objections to Peter Saunders' work on meritocracy (18 July), Yvette Cooper is still too charitable. Saunders seems to think that it is fair for social advantage to be passed from parents to children as long as this is done meritocratically. But why? Suppose Saunders is right to believe that her superior, inherited, natural ability helps explain why children of middle-class parents are so likely to get middle-class jobs. How does that make the resulting distribution of income "unequal but fair"? Why should one person earn more than another simply because she happens to have been born with different genes? Arguing that people should get



My career was on hold and nobody knew who I was until I resigned

jobs on merit is one thing: it helps all of us if jobs are done by those best able to do them. But permitting their good or bad luck in the natural lottery to influence how much money people earn doesn't look very fair to me.  
ADAM SWIFT  
Balliol College  
Oxford

### Vouchers will restrict choice

Sir: The National Private Day Nurseries Association has long been shouting its disapproval of schools considering lowering the reception class entry age to four, in order to improve their financial status. ("Vouchers scheme forces schools to start children at four", 22 July). We insist that parents have a choice as to where they place their four-year-olds; in effect this choice is being removed. Parents will need to take up school places offered or run the risk of having no place at the school of their choice when the child reaches compulsory school age.

Private day nurseries can offer education and care on the same site with ratios of one adult to every eight children, as laid down by the Children Act. Can a reception class of up to 40 children with one teacher provide the same opportunities? Each sector is being forced to compete against the other. Are the years of partnership building to be swept away by an ill-conceived scheme?  
ROSEMARY MURPHY  
National Chair  
National Private Day Nurseries Association  
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

### Spooks with no licence to kill

Sir: Jo Brand (20 July), writing about my and allegedly Stella Rimington's participation in the game show *Whodunnit*, claims that "the spy services... doubtless killed people". She did not get it quite right.

The KGB, as the Soviet socialist state's secret police, in the past killed innumerable of their own people. Its foreign intelligence branch carried out assassinations abroad on some of its opponents. But then it got cold feet, and since the 1950s it did not dare kill a single person outside the borders of the USSR. The British intelligence and security services have never killed anybody.  
OLEG GORDIEVSKY  
London WC2

### Making NHS do the business

Sir: Further to the letter from Dr Rhidian Morris (13 July) on GP fundholding, I entered the National Health Service in 1991 when I became a fundholding manager for a first-wave fundholding practice, having spent my life before that as company secretary and accountant in industry and commerce.

I was amazed at the lack of business expertise within the NHS, and more so by the lack of basic

statistical knowledge about the needs of patients. The practice could not say which of its patients were on hospital waiting lists, or for what procedures, and hospitals could not say how many people were waiting, and how the problem was being tackled. There was little evidence of information available which could be used for forward planning, establishing priorities, or writing budgets (they said "what's a budget?"), and the whole ethos of the service was that money would continue to flow from central coffers as needs emerged.

Fundholding and the establishment of NHS trust hospitals has changed all that. Proper business plans are now in place at all units, so that everyone knows what the objectives are, and how it is proposed to meet them. Complaints about a two-tier service are rubbish - if you set out to improve a service, you can't expect immediate and universal success throughout the land. What you can do is gradually introduce the changes over the longer term.  
GRAHAM BLINCOV  
Sheffield, South Yorkshire

### Battling heirs to Tolpuddle

Sir: Polly Toynbee (22 July), using as a peg for her piece the annual Tolpuddle commemoration, wrote an ill-informed obituary for trade unionism.

She strangely omitted to mention that on the day before

Tolpuddle, the TUC's Respect Festival drew 80,000 young people to Finsbury Park in north London. This event was sponsored by companies such as British Airways, BT, Coca Cola, Marks & Spencer and Ford. When did a political party last attract such numbers?

Neither did she mention that 85 out of the FT-SE top 100 companies still recognise and negotiate with unions, that last year the TUC and member unions recovered £350m for employees taken ill or hurt for work reasons, and that we handled two million job-related personal problems in 1995.

Joe Hill, the American union folk hero, said, "Don't mourn, organise," and that's what we are doing in insecure, unequal Britain.  
JOHN MONKS  
General Secretary  
Trades Union Congress  
London WC1

Sir: As a descendant of two of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, Thomas and John Standfield, I must correct Polly Toynbee's commonplace error: they were not convicted of forming a trade union, a lawful activity under an 1832 Act. Rather, their crime was to administer an illegal oath, under the Administration of Oaths Act, 1797. This and the Mutinies Act of the same year were designed to prevent the enticement away from service of men during the Napoleonic Wars. The 1797 Act was used by vested interests to frustrate the intentions of the 1832 Act.  
C H STANDFIELD  
London W7

### Humbug? No, just democracy

Sir: Seeking to change the world does not entail acting as if you had already done so.

MPs ought to be dedicated to democracy, so there is nothing inconsistent or "odd", as David Winnick, MP, seems to suppose (report, 23 July) in MPs voting against a pay increase, but then accepting it when outvoted.

Tony Blair is publicly engaged in combating "crime and the causes of crime", but no one accuses him of humbug if he locks his car after parking.

Why then, is Harriet Harman under attack?  
ROGER LAKE  
York

### CNN cameras on the roof

Sir: Bob Graham's article from Atlanta (6 July) stated that CNN plans to broadcast live coverage of the Olympics, using a camera site on the roof of Pauly D's Bar. This is categorically not true.

CNN will use the roof of Pauly D's Bar, as well as many other locations, throughout Atlanta, as a backdrop to report the news of the Games. We are aware of, and fully respect, the broadcasting agreements between the International Olympic Committee and the companies that have bought the rights.  
GERALDINE SHARPE-NEWTON  
Senior Vice President  
International Public Relations  
Turner Broadcasting  
London W7

### Futile challenge to the euro

Sir: None of the politicians who want us to cling on to a weak national currency tell us how they will protect the pound from a rush into the euro, which will be backed by currency reserves many times ours and will be traded in a rich market of at least 200 million customers.

At present the yield on UK corporate bonds is 30 per cent higher than it is in the core countries of the euro, France, Benelux and Germany, so their industrialists can put down 30 per cent more investment for the same interest cost, leaving us to tag along with older and older products. Sure, we want our labour costs to be competitive, but industry today is capital-intensive, and if our industry does not have a level playing field on the cost of capital now, what interest premium will they have to offer when there is a common European currency as strong as the German mark and far more widely traded? And if we cannot keep up with their investment, how can we balance our trade and keep our people at work?

Sir FRED CATHERWOOD  
Balsham, Cambridgeshire

### Oxford doubts on Said college

Sir: You report ("Saudi 'Mr Fbi' gives Oxford £20m", 17 July) that £20m is to be given to the University of Oxford to build a new college for management studies. Your report would have been more complete if it had mentioned the misgivings some friends of the university feel about the proposal.

They are as follows: that the building is to go on a "green" site near the centre of the city and university; that the proposed college will be single-discipline; and, most important, that the discipline, management studies, lies too far from the proven subject areas which have given Oxford and Cambridge their world reputation.

In voicing these anxieties I recognise the generosity of the intending donor, Wafic Said. But at a time when the Bodleian Library closes early for lack of staff, when teaching posts are frozen in core undergraduate subjects like classics (Oxford's faculty was described to me recently by an American classicist as the "best in the world"), and when students end their three-year course usually in debt, it is hard to applaud a "greenfield" creation recommended, apparently, mainly by the readiness of well-wishers outside the university to pay for it, yet a mere fraction of whose cost could supply the vitamins whose lack weakens the university in its existing functions.

ALEXANDER MURRAY  
University College  
Oxford

### Encore!

Sir: Now that the promenade concert season is with us again I would like to know why home orchestras at concerts in London rarely, if ever, play encores - no matter how enthusiastically their performance has been received. Visiting foreign orchestras can be relied upon to continue to entertain with two or three additional pieces at the end of the published programme.  
KENNETH BILLINGS  
Crowthorne, East Sussex



# Why did we fail in Suez?

Forty years ago this week, Egypt nationalised the canal and Britain set off down the road to humiliation. Nigel Ashton explains how London lost its nerve

On 26 July 1956, the Egyptian leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, claimed to a cheering crowd in Alexandria the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. Far more than any other act, the nationalisation symbolised for Egyptians the liberation of the country from British imperialist influence.

For the British government Nasser's actions symbolised something far more sinister. Nasser, a man who was likened to Hitler or Mussolini, had seized the jugular vein of the Empire. If his grip was not loosened, economic strangulation and political eclipse threatened the nation.

From the outset, all the leading members of Anthony Eden's Cabinet regarded Suez as an issue over which Britain should be prepared to go to war. Nasser's nationalist rhetoric, calling on the Arab world to reject British influence, seemed a direct threat to Britain's national interests. Top of the list of such interests were concerns over access to Gulf oil resources. In the pre-supertanker era, the bulk of Britain's oil supply passed through the canal, and the future economic health of the nation seemed dependent on keeping it out of hostile hands. As Eden memorably told one official of Nasser: "It's either him or us, don't forget that."

The main problem that confronted Eden's government was how to come up with a pretext both for reversing Nasser's nationalisation and ousting him from power. From the outset it was clear that these twin goals could only be accomplished by a full-scale invasion of Egypt.

In order to carry out such an operation, time was needed to assemble the appropriate forces. Here Suez paralleled the Falklands War. Negotiations had to be attempted in the meantime simply to fill the gap before military action.

During August, September and October of 1956, the government attempted a variety of diplomatic gambits, including an international conference and an appeal to the United Nations Security Council. The principal goal behind all of these attempts was not so much to resolve the crisis as to draw the US administration of Pres-

ident Dwight D Eisenhower into supporting the British position.

The difficulty here was that the diplomacy of Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was aimed in the opposite direction to that of Eden's government. Dulles, in particular, was to have criticism heaped on him by British politicians and the press for his supposed duplicity during the crisis. A controversial figure at the best of times, Dulles's puritanical character had been famously dismissed by Churchill in three words: "dull, duller, Dulles." During the Suez crisis itself, Dulles's poor relations with leading figures in the British government did little to assist him in deflecting their wartime intentions.

What Dulles did manage to do with his various schemes for establishing international control over the canal was to pass time. By the middle of October, with Nasser's nationalisation announcement an increasingly distant memory, the domestic consensus over Suez was coming under pressure. On the one hand, the right of the Conservative Party was urging Eden to take decisive action. On the other, Hugh Gaitskill's Labour Party, which had initially been supportive of Eden's policy, was becoming increasingly restless. Whether Eden moved to compromise with or to confront Nasser, he seemed destined to fracture the domestic consensus in Britain over Suez.

What Eden desperately needed was a convincing new pretext to act against Nasser. Here, the French government came to his rescue. The French were concerned not only by Nasser's nationalisation of the Canal Company but also by his activities in supporting Algerian rebels against French rule. A community of interest existed between Britain and France in respect of ousting Nasser.

On 14 October 1956, two French officials arrived at Chequers with a plan that Eden found intriguing. They pointed out that Israel also had an interest in seeing Nasser's downfall. David Ben Gurion's government had been showing increasing concern about the Nasser regime ever since Nasser had signed an arms deal with the Soviet Union the previous year. Given the opportunity, the officials argued, Israel

could be persuaded to launch an attack on Egypt.

Britain and France could then intervene, posing as peace-makers. An ultimatum would be issued to both Israel and Egypt to pull back from the canal. When the Egyptians refused, as they would have to since the canal was deep inside their territory, Britain and France could land forces on the canal. This, combined with a successful Israeli strike, should be sufficient to topple Nasser.

One does not have to delve far beneath the surface of the scheme to see how shallow the cover story was. Britain and France were locked in a bitter dispute with Egypt over the canal, so their intervention was hardly likely to seem impartial. Moreover, who would believe that the British and French governments had had no warning of Israeli intentions, when the timing of the attack was so propitious for their purposes?

Nevertheless, Eden pressed ahead with the scheme. A deal was done with the French and the Israelis and an unlikely alliance was formed. Indeed, Ben Gurion remained suspicious of British intentions all along and critical of British hypocrisy in seeking to divert the blame on to Israel.

On 29 October 1956, the Israelis began their attack. Paratroopers were dropped at the strategic Mita Pass in the Sinai Desert, and Israeli armoured units crossed the Egyptian border. In order to preserve the pretence of ignorance of Israeli intentions, the British armada assembled at Malta had to wait until the Israelis moved before setting sail for the Egyptian coast. The best part of a week's sailing time lay ahead of it before troops could be landed. In the meantime, the British and French role was to veto anti-Israeli resolutions at the United Nations and issue their ultimatum to both sides.

Even if these actions had not provoked international suspicions, the ensuing bombing of Egyptian airfields by the RAF was guaranteed to do so.

The first days of November saw intense diplomatic pressure on Britain from the United States. American records show that as early as the third day of the crisis the full outline of the collusion between Britain, France and Israel was clear to

Eisenhower. His outrage was deepened by the fact that he was in the final days of a re-election campaign, and by the fact that the Soviet Union chose the Suez crisis as the opportune moment to crush the reformist Nagy regime in Hungary.

Nevertheless, Eden pressed ahead. The domestic consensus had fractured and huge crowds took to the streets to protest against what some described as Britain's act of war. Early on the morning of 5 November, British paratroopers began landing near Port Said at the mouth of the canal, followed a day later by the amphibious assault.

Within hours of the beginning of this phase of the crisis, the nerve of the Cabinet began to crack. Harold Macmillan's nerve broke first. Charged with the task of maintaining financial stability during the crisis, he was shocked to discover that Anglo-American relations had

broken down to the extent that the US administration was actively blocking his attempt to stabilise sterling.

Despite the weight of international and domestic condemnation of the government's actions, it still seems extraor-

sible worlds. She had acted but not succeeded; shown resolve then lost her nerve.

It seems probable that if the British government had pressed ahead and faced the Eisenhower administration with the fait accompli of the removal of

**In the view of the Americans, Britain had acted but not succeeded; shown resolve then lost her nerve**

dinary that the attack was stopped so soon after being started. Weeks after the decision to cease fire was taken on 6 November, Dulles, who had been hospitalised for much of the crisis, asked an incredulous Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, why Britain had not carried the attack through. Eisenhower, too, later recorded the same opinion. Britain, in their view, had the worst of all pos-

sible worlds. She had acted but not succeeded; shown resolve then lost her nerve. It seems probable that if the British government had pressed ahead and faced the Eisenhower administration with the fait accompli of the removal of

Nasser. US interests would have dictated acquiescence in the outcome. The vehemence of the US response in the first days of November was perhaps dictated more by the circumstantial factors of the election campaign and the Hungarian crisis than by deeper-seated US interests in the region.

Even with the benefit of hindsight and access to a wide range of sources, the British

decision to halt operations on 6 November remains difficult to understand. Much like the original decision to opt for collusion, that to cease fire can perhaps only be understood in the context of the psychological stress endured by Eden and his closest advisers. The elastic of their nerve had been stretched to its limit, and so it snapped. Within weeks of the ceasefire British troops were evacuated from Egypt and Eden resigned the premiership, to be succeeded by Macmillan.

Many historians have seen the British defeat over Suez as a crucial watershed in the nation's post-war history. From this point, it is argued, the dismantling of the Empire was inevitable. Britain would now play only a subservient role to the United States in the waging of the Cold War in the Middle East and beyond.

There is no doubt that the crisis is important, not least in exposing the lack of domestic

consensus over imperial policy. However, to cast it as a truly epoch-making event perhaps goes too far. The decision to dismantle the African empire, although taken in the years after Suez, was not directly contingent on it.

Also, Britain proved herself capable of undertaking independent military actions in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world in the years after Suez. As late as 1982, Britain undertook a major military operation in defence of a residual imperial commitment in the Falklands.

Perhaps the importance of Suez is in fact symbolic. It brought to the surface deeper processes of change in Britain's position in the world, the legacy of which the nation's leaders are still trying to work out.

Nigel Ashton is the author of *Eisenhower, Macmillan and the Problem of Nasser*, published by Macmillan, £40.



The heat of the moment: within hours of British paratroopers landing in Egypt, Eden's government began to waver

Photograph: Hulton Getty

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**There's nothing wrong with a good yarn**

This time last week the author Philip Pullman was causing a fuss by saying, in his acceptance speech after winning the Carnegie Medal for his children's book *Northern Lights*, that most adult fiction was not doing its job properly because it wasn't telling stories properly. It was just being too clever and experimental. The leading article of the *Independent* cheered with delight at this, and expressed everyone's relief that we didn't really have to say we enjoyed Salman Rushdie or Martin Amis or almost anyone who has won the Booker Prize.

(Indeed, there was another report on literature in the same issue, which brought the news that 129 MPs had been polled by Dillos to find out their nominations for the most overrated authors of all time. Jeffrey Archer just pipped Salman Rushdie for the title, followed by Henry James, Martin Amis, DH Lawrence, Enid Blyton and Iris Murdoch. It's an interesting list, because it combines a dislike for people who

do nothing but tell a story (Archer and Blyton) with those who sometimes seem to be doing anything but tell a story. The list also contains some great personal unfavourables of mine (though not Enid Blyton), so my respect for MPs has suddenly come back on the scale again.)

It was odd for me to see Philip Pullman's name in the headlines, as until a month ago I had never heard of him. Then, while in Canada, I bought a copy of the *Toronto Star* on 16 June and read a long interview with him about his new book, *The Golden Compass* (which I imagine is the name under which they have published *Northern Lights* over the other side).

As I read this interview I started chuckling and cheering audibly, rather as the *Independent* leader writer must have done, because Pullman was so unaccountably full of such good common sense. (You sometimes get liberating moments like this when you realise that you do not actually have to go through life being



**Miles Kingston**

obliged to like most modern art or most contemporary concert music or most rock music...)

Here is part of the interview.

"At some point in the 20th century what happened is that fiction for adults began to lose its way, and the purveyors of story began to split off from the purveyors of, say, psychological and social truth. This split never happened in the world of children's books. Children's books are still expected to do both. You have a strong story, an interesting plot, believable characters and a three-dimensional solid world."

"At the same time you can

think about such issues as honour, loyalty, truth, betrayal — all the big themes. So there's a kind of wholeness about children's literature that adult literature seems to have lost. The best writers for children are the best writers today. No question."

Asked to name some of these writers, says the *Toronto Star*, Pullman cites Peter Dickinson and Jan Mark, among British children's authors, and Robert Cormier and Betsy Byars among American. The only one of these I have ever read is Peter Dickinson, whose books are so outstanding that if the others are half as good, then Pullman is a top tipster.

What Pullman is doing of course, is not only defending children's books (and decrying adult novels), he is putting the case for genre fiction. I have heard the same sort of case that Pullman puts for children's books being put for detective fiction (Chandler was hot in its defence), spy fiction and science fiction, and always with great justice. I haven't seen Peter Dick-

inson for a long time, and not much since the 1960s when he was leaving *Punch* just after I joined it, but I can remember that he was ahead of his time in other matters apart from children's fiction. One was in his belief that story-telling audio tapes would be big business, and in or around 1970 he actually made some. (I remember that he commissioned me to write a boys' football yarn then, which I did, though I have no record of it.)

He was only about 20 years too soon. He also dreamt up a TV or radio panel game that would depend on crossword-like clues, and now, 25 years later, we have *Cross Question* on Radio 4. None of their clues, however, is as good as the one he used as an example. "I'm going to give you two words that sound identical but which have two quite different meanings. OK? The clue is: 'lobster at the railway junction... lobster at the railway junction...'"

I never did guess it. The answer was "Crews Station — crustacean..."



## the commentators

# If your job embarrasses you, get a new one

When people choose to do distasteful work despite their private beliefs, public morality is eroded

A question of principle: is it OK for your day job to conflict with everything else you believe in? Can you labour all day in the fields of your enemies, then come home in the evening, take out your conscience and sigh about the way one has to make one's living these days? Growing numbers of people live in this schizophrenic fashion, trying to hold on to a personal morality of their own while doing things at work they despise. What does it imply for any kind of public morality if that is an acceptable way to live?

A most glaring example came to light this week when it was revealed, despite her first denials, that the main author of the leaked Treasury document that thought the unthinkable about demolishing the welfare state, privatisation, and abandoning free higher education was herself attempting to become a Labour candidate in a safe Yorkshire seat. By day she was Antia the Hun, by night she was New Labour - a political werewolf.

Yesterday it emerged that her original draft was even more unthinkable before it was toned down. One Whitehall official was quoted as saying: "The riot act was read when the original was handed in. It was politically explosive. It advocated virtually the privatisation of the entire NHS, the welfare state and sell-off of the public transport system."

Now while one or two hot-heads among right-wing conspiracy-theorist MPs immediately suspected a red mole in the Treasury who had deliberately produced an embarrassing document to discredit the Government, no one else takes that idea seriously. The author is a 37-year-old middle-ranking official who has been in the Treasury for 13 years, and her employers do not think she had any hand in leaking her report. Its leaking has, after all, embarrassed her more than anyone else and it has probably destroyed her political ambitions.

No, the phenomenon is far more interesting than that. You could say she was a very model of the modern civil servant: a clever, efficient instrument who can turn her hand to any task she is given. Each day she hangs up her own conscience on the peg where she hangs her coat. She is an automaton, without personal morality, a paradigm of obedience to her political masters. Sir Robin Butler should be proud of her.

But what do we really think of people who live like that? Do we really want to be ruled by people without personal accountability for their actions - just following orders, just



POLLY TOYNEE

doing their job? In Whitehall, the best permanent secretaries, the most creative and admired, have been those who do let their own opinions show. There is a lot of constitutional fiction about the role of civil servants. After all, ministers pass through departments every two years or less, arriving knowing nothing, leaving knowing mainly what their civil servants have taught them. Do we want politicians to be guided and educated by those who pretend to no personal values, with no moral stake in the affairs they govern? I would prefer men and women of principle, right or left - even though that might mean that on a change of government they would be more likely to be moved on. There is nothing very admirable in the rubber morals of a civil servant who can, for instance, enthusiastically help Michael Howard fill prisons to bursting point and then with equal vim let them all go again under his successor.

This institutionalised amorality is also a striking feature of life in the law. The much vaunted taxi-rank principle whereby barristers hire themselves out to the next comer, regardless of the merits of the case, has always struck me as singularly odd. It makes the law a game rather than a matter of conviction. Getting some villain off becomes a matter of brilliance and prowess for which they congratulate one another.

The culture of the hired gun is creeping up on us everywhere. These days it flourishes in the contract climate of job insecurity. People feel scant responsibility for the work they do and little identification with their place of work or its purposes, when their employers show no particular commitment to them. That makes it easy for them to absolve themselves of moral responsibility for the job they do.

I suppose I see the most extreme end of that in the world of journalism. Apparently serious and decent journalists hire themselves out as fig leaves of respectability to pretty despicable newspapers, justifying it

to themselves on the grounds that they have nothing to do with the day-to-day sleaze. "Never met Murdoch." "No one ever tampered with my copy or tells me what to write, so what does it matter where I write it?" It matters. These excuses are lame. The more distinguished the names, the more prized they are as emulsion to white the sepulchre.

Among the humbler fry, the bright young beginners trying to work their way up through increasingly tough and nasty newspapers in the hope of reaching the few respectable newspapers some day, the game is not worth the candle. They acquire the skill of turning their pen to any nefarious cause, arguing any outlandish case the editor or proprietor demands, spinning words, warping facts, becoming elegant liars. But there are other jobs, easier to get and less taxing on the conscience.

Most people who do work they have to apologise for are in positions where they do have a choice. Perhaps these mean a bit less money or status, but "just doing my job" won't do. When "just doing my job" means drawing up imaginative Treasury plans to demolish the welfare state you are politically committed to sustaining, it is time to find a new career.

## Guns are fine, but don't ask for a hose

The wells of sanity are drying up, says Ann Treneman

Britain is suffering from sprinkler restrictions so out of control that the grass is even greener in America's desert state of Nevada. "What is a sprinkler licence?" asked an amused Jim Rickett, the senior water licence officer for Las Vegas. "Even with our drought, we haven't gone to those extremes."

It is easier to buy a gun in Las Vegas than use a sprinkler in Kent. In Vegas, you go to the gun store, fill out a form and wait five days for FBI computer checks. In mid-Kent, you call "sprinkler information" to be told your "free" sprinkler licence requires a water meter. That costs £150 and takes four to five weeks to arrive.

It may be easier to license a gun here than to sprinkle legally. On the Guns and Hoses chart, a five-year shotgun licence is £43 and a renewal is £18 while a sprinkler licence (even without the metering charge) can cost from £20 a year in Chester to £49 in Wexham. Of course, to license a gun you need to apply to your local police station and get a referee. No such thing is needed for a sprinkler licence - yet.

That "yet" is necessary because sprinklers are the contraptions that drive neighbours to turn each other in, giving green with envy a new meaning. "We get three or four people phoning in each day to say their neighbour is using a sprinkler. Our customers are very supportive," says Malcolm Bailey of Mid-Kent Water.

If you look up in the sky over Kent you could see a plane trailing the message, "A Sprinkler Needs a Licence". In England and Wales some 10 companies charge for hosepipe or sprinkler licences; others offer "free" licensing if you pay out for a meter.

Ofwat, the consumer watchdog, favours metering. It says that a sprinkler uses as much water in an hour as a family of four does in two days.

In Vegas, it's a different story. There, the green, green grass of a mythical non-desert home is seen as a blight and Stephanie Stallworth of Southern Nevada Water Authority thinks education, not legislation, is the way forward. "People see a strong correlation between lush green landscaping and quality of life. We've got to change the mentality. We would like to see turf used for functional purposes only. Otherwise, we encourage other landscapes. For instance there's xeriscaping, that's the latest thing in desert landscaping. It uses drought-tolerant succulents and palms. It's very beautiful."

In Las Vegas the average water cost for a family is about £150 a year and there has never been a sprinkler ban. In this green and pleasant land the average water bill is about £215 a year and there are six companies with hosepipe bans in England.

Oh, did I mention average rainfall? In England it is 32.4 inches a year. In Las Vegas it is 3.8 inches. Xeriscaping seems the only way to go.

# Harriet in the shadows

She may survive today's election but there are doubts over Harriet Harman's long-term place in Tony Blair's top team

She is the telegenic face of new Labour and she will not be abandoned now, despite the hostility of fellow MPs and their thirst for revenge over her decision earlier this year to send her son to a selective grammar school.

If Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokesperson, survives today's Shadow Cabinet election, it will be due entirely to a show of front-bench solidarity that has been dictated in almost all cases by the top. For Harriet Harman, 45, the member for Peckham in south-east London, holds a trump card or two, and can afford to brazen out her deep unpopularity with the parliamentary party. But it has less to do with her political skills - questions about which have dogged her career in the Commons - than with her perceived attractiveness to certain voters.

First off is her quintessential middle-classness. Her father was a Harley Street consultant and her mother a lawyer. She is a niece of the well-connected Labour peer Lord Longford, and she was educated at St Paul's, a private girl's school in London. Harman studied law at York University before qualifying as a solicitor. It is a pedigree that speaks louder to wavering Tory supporters and floating voters in the South-east than any policy document or assurance from a front-bench member.

She has the "F" factor appeal to male voters - fanciability - but this is balanced by her role-model status for working

women everywhere. She is, by every account, a devoted mother of three and enjoys a successful marriage to Jack Dromey, a national official with the Transport and General Workers' Union.

She looks good on television too; Blair's ears, Brown's frowns, and John Prescott's straining bulldog-in-a-suit persona are diminished on any platform by

Profile by  
Liz Hunt

Harman's truly stunning baby-blue eyes. And, of course, she is a close personal friend of Blair and a member of his inner circle.

All of which, in new Labour's eyes, adds up to a vote-winning combination that Blair refuses to jettison, despite Harman's current status as his most-reviled front-bencher, and doubts about whether she is up to such a big job as health in a Labour government.

She suffered as shadow chief secretary from being a loyal lieutenant to Gordon Brown as he was determinedly steering the party away from its pre-1992 tax-and-spend policy. With Brown unassailable she served as the lightning conductor for discontent. But she campaigned assiduously - and successfully - for the reduction in VAT on fuel, and she handled Labour's minimum wage policy deftly.

When she was first at health, as number two to Robin Cook, one of her few original ideas

was for a hypothecated tax for the NHS - something that was promptly sat on by John Smith, a Treasury man to the core.

Critics say she has consistently failed to come across as a thinker, or even as someone with more than a basic grasp of policy.

Her greatest strength is also her greatest weakness. She has the self-confidence of someone born to rule. This may give her an unshakable belief in her own abilities, but it makes her look arrogant and impervious to criticism.

At odds with her voter-friendly and stylish appearance is a tendency to harangue and hector. This strident style is off-putting in debate. She has an unerring ability to confuse voters on key issues, such as the private finance initiative in the NHS and Labour's on-off support for it.

She is a modernist and yet her instincts on the health service are clearly old Labour. She rejects vehemently anything at all worthwhile in the Tory's NHS reforms. And her apparent lack of clout with the Shadow Cabinet means that, on current figures, Labour will enter an election campaign with less money in real terms for the health service than the Conservatives.

Her sound-bites are predictable and she relies heavily on statistical bombardment - rather in the style of that other "Head Girl", the former health secretary Virginia Bottomley.

Officials at the Department of Health live in fear of Harman's arrival there as another



Bottomley who will attach as much importance to presentation and style as to the substance of her policy.

But there is more: Harman has never given any indication that she understands the difference between being in Government and opposition. She can cope adequately with attacking and rejecting Tory government policies. But she has yet to show that she can come up with new ideas or make hard choices about the NHS - and take people with her who don't agree. On present form, not something she appears to care much about.

However, her frequent wimpy performances in the House of Commons and at press conferences have occasionally been redeemed by flamboyant displays of gutsiness. One such was her appearance before the Parliamentary Labour Party in January to explain why she was sending her son, Joe, to St Olave's, the grammar school in Orpington, Kent, 10 miles from the family home. The adrenaline was still flowing that afternoon with an acclaimed performance in the Commons when she opened an opposition debate on the health service. Temporarily, she silenced calls for her resignation. Blair breathed easy.

The secret of Harman's political survival so far - lies in her tenacity, and her ability to tough it out in a crisis. She has been bolstered in this by total faith in her own value to new Labour in any election campaign. But should Labour win the next election, she will have to deliver on more than votes.

For the time being, Harman has the patronage of Blair - at least until the election. He said at the time of the St Olave's crisis that he understood absolutely the dilemma, of a parent wanting the best for a child, and he risked much to save her. But it is said that she has not been grateful enough to him, and his closest aides are still baying for her blood.

Mischief-makers have been touting the name of Harman's great friend Tessa Jowell as the real choice for health secretary should Labour form the next government. Revenge enough for her enemies?

Of blue eyes: she harangues and hectors in spite of her smooth image  
Tony Buckingham

# 'Railway hopes disappear down the tunnel

Cross-Channel train services have disappointed expectations of a rail renaissance. Is there another way?

The Channel Tunnel should have been the best thing to have happened to Britain's railways since the railway mania of the 1840s. As the holiday season of 1996 reaches its height, one might have expected people all over Britain to be lining up on train platforms to be swept by rail to their sunny European destinations, but it hasn't worked out that way.

There are of course the wonderful Eurostars and those huge freight trains on improbable runs, such as Manchester to Milan. But the Channel Tunnel has not transformed and invigorated the rail network in the way railway lovers hoped it would.

So far, all companies involved in the tunnel are losers. The freight companies have leached money, Eurostar is barely breaking even and of course Eurotunnel itself is all but bankrupt. Earlier this month, British Rail announced it was writing off £500m because it had been too optimistic in its assessment of the level of freight going through the tunnel. And while the passenger side has been more successful, it has not been profitable. Last year Eurostar, which was still building up momentum, made an operating loss - ie, it lost money even if one ignores the interest payments on the £900m or so it spent on trains and refurbishing lines. This year, when Eurostar trains

are expected to carry four million passengers, it will probably make an operating profit but that is not good enough. London & Continental, the company that won the tender to build the £3bn Channel Tunnel rail link, has been given the Eurostar services as a potential milch cow with which to fund the construction of the line. But will the cow ever produce milk?

EPS, the company that operates Eurostar and is owned jointly by the French and Belgian railways and L&C, is now benefiting from the marketing expertise of two of L&C's partners, Virgin and National Express. There are lots of good ideas. On July 1, EPS launched its first direct trains to Disneyland Paris from Waterloo. It has also begun running a 4.53am train to Paris aimed at giving business travellers the opportunity to make a 9.30am meeting in the French capital, and in the winter there are to be direct trains to the ski resorts of the Savoie in France. While all this is innovative, and will ensure better use of the trains, it is not enough to turn the finances round.

Eurostar is dogged by the fact that all its trains are 777 seaters, which is like an airline running only planes the size of two Jumbo jets on every flight. Unlike their TGV equivalents, the trains cannot be split, and on the Brus-



CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

sels route staff have taken to closing up half the train on many services to save hassle. Indeed, the woman behind the counter told me on a recent Brussels trip that she had never seen the standard class seats filled on any service to the Belgian capital. Even when the journey time is reduced in 1998 to

Eurostar faces massive competition from airlines and ferries

two and a half hours by the construction of the Belgian high-speed line, there will still be an awful lot of bumless seats on the Brussels services.

Worse is to come. Early next year overnight sleeper and daytime trains - from places such as Plymouth,

Cardiff, Manchester and Glasgow - will start running through the tunnel to a variety of destinations in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. These trains are a result of a political promise made by ministers to provincial MPs a decade ago, at the time of the passing of the Channel Tunnel legislation, and are bound to lose a fortune. There is no market for such long-distance rail travel given that airlines offer such cheap seats and are, of course, much faster.

Worst of all, Eurostar faces massive competition. The airlines have reduced fares and the ferry companies and Le Shuttle are in the midst of a crazy price war. While Eurostar is by far the best product, if fares over or under the Channel and in the air are so cheap, it will be hard pressed to make much money. Already, since its launch, its ticket prices have tumbled. Students can get a return to Paris for as little as £49 and even premium fares aimed at business people have been slashed.

I don't want to seem churlish about the Channel Tunnel. It is good for Britain, good for Europe. I love the Eurostar trains. But so far, with the failure of freight and Eurostar struggling, one has to ask whether the massive amounts of capital spent on the project might have been better invested in the domestic rail system.

Certainly, not all the money has been spent wisely. In a sane world, the wonderful Waterloo station would not have been built and the high-speed Channel Tunnel rail link between St Pancras station and Folkestone would have been ready in time for the opening of the tunnel. The trains would also have been more flexible and cheaper. There would have been fewer crazy security restrictions which irritate passengers, such as the time when much-delayed passengers from Paris to London, who had transferred from a broken down train, were turfed out for an hour at Lille so that their baggage could be put through a machine.

At the time of the announcement of L&C's successful bid to build the Channel Tunnel rail link (CTRL), it seemed the offer was generous. The company was given the EPS trains - worth a cool £999m - lots of land around St Pancras and east London, and a £1.4bn grant, all to build a link costing £3bn. However, looking at it now, getting the link built is going to be tight. There is no guarantee that the link can be built under this deal. The key question is, even with the Virgin expertise, will Eurostar ever generate enough cash to ensure that CTRL will happen? Gordon Brown - should he be our next Chancellor - is going to face some tricky demands over this one.

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Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	D-MARK Spot
US	1.5509	6-4	6-3		1.000	2-1	2-0		0.670
Canada	2.2067	11-3	10-9		1.375	25-24	24-23		0.882
Germany	2.3904	48-10	48-10		1.4627	28-28	28-28		0.920
France	165.00	35-10	35-10		6.0422	29-29	29-29		1.360
Italy	224.60	48-43	48-43		39.40	40-40	40-40		1.760
Japan	165.00	48-43	48-43		102.05	40-41	40-41		1.760
ECU	122.68	1-1	1-1		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
Belgium	229.02	12-7	12-7		30.765	0-1	0-1		0.670
Denmark	165.00	48-43	48-43		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Netherlands	2.3904	48-10	48-10		30.765	0-1	0-1		0.670
Portugal	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Spain	165.01	21-31	21-31		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Sweden	12.026	12-7	12-7		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
Switzerland	165.00	48-43	48-43		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
UK	1.5509	6-4	6-3		1.000	2-1	2-0		0.670
Australia	1.5509	6-4	6-3		1.000	2-1	2-0		0.670
Canada	2.2067	11-3	10-9		1.375	25-24	24-23		0.882
Germany	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.0422	29-29	29-29		1.360
France	165.00	35-10	35-10		39.40	40-40	40-40		1.760
Italy	224.60	48-43	48-43		102.05	40-41	40-41		1.760
Japan	165.00	48-43	48-43		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
ECU	122.68	1-1	1-1		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
Belgium	229.02	12-7	12-7		30.765	0-1	0-1		0.670
Denmark	165.00	48-43	48-43		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Netherlands	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Portugal	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Spain	165.01	21-31	21-31		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Sweden	12.026	12-7	12-7		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
Switzerland	165.00	48-43	48-43		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
UK	1.5509	6-4	6-3		1.000	2-1	2-0		0.670
Australia	1.5509	6-4	6-3		1.000	2-1	2-0		0.670
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Germany	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.0422	29-29	29-29		1.360
France	165.00	35-10	35-10		39.40	40-40	40-40		1.760
Italy	224.60	48-43	48-43		102.05	40-41	40-41		1.760
Japan	165.00	48-43	48-43		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
ECU	122.68	1-1	1-1		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670
Belgium	229.02	12-7	12-7		30.765	0-1	0-1		0.670
Denmark	165.00	48-43	48-43		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Netherlands	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Portugal	2.3904	48-10	48-10		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Spain	165.01	21-31	21-31		6.7445	0-1	0-1		0.670
Sweden	12.026	12-7	12-7		1.3833	0-1	0-1		0.670



# BoE to beef up banking supervision

PETER RODGERS  
Financial Editor

Barings executive tells MPs of warnings ignored as Bank plans reorganised department

The Bank of England will today complete an overhaul of banking supervision resulting from the Barings crisis by announcing plans to beef up and enlarge its supervisory department and establish a high-level quality assurance unit.

The plans emerge a day after a Commons Select Committee was told by Ian Hopkins, the former treasurer of Barings Investment Bank, that he had repeatedly warned of poor supervisory controls at Barings, but been ignored by Peter Norris, his boss.

Mr Hopkins also described "turf wars", shouting matches and table banging in discussions of supervisory issues with other Barings senior staff, and

claimed that if his plans for improvements had not been obstructed the group might have been saved.

The Bank of England is basing its wide ranging new supervisory reorganisation on a report commissioned last October from Arthur Andersen, the chartered accountants. The Banking Act annual report in May said supervisory and surveillance staff numbers would rise from 384 this February to 391 next February, but further increases are likely.

A significant attempt to improve the standing of the supervision department has already been foreshadowed by Howard Davies, the Deputy Governor, who has suggested all the

Bank's high flyers spend some time in the department, whose morale crashed after Barings.

The Banking Act report said Arthur Andersen was comparing the supervision department with other regulators in the UK and abroad, interviewing a wide range of banks, studying the way bank staff use their time and examining recruitment, staff retention and training, and levels of qualification.

Part of the review's brief was to set out clear objectives for supervision, it added.

Arthur Andersen was asked to draw up recommendations for an independent and high-powered quality assurance unit to watch over the supervision department, to ensure policies are

implemented and to identify where they need to be reviewed.

This was based on a proposal in the report on Barings last year by the Board of Banking Supervision (BBS). Part of the new Arthur Andersen-designed system was given a trial run in March. It is one of only two of the BBS' 17 recommendations yet to be implemented.

At the select committee, Mr Hopkins said he believed the Bank of England supervisors should be more interventionist but he reserved more blame for the Securities and Futures Authority, saying: "I see the regulatory failure on the SFA side rather than the Bank of England side."

Mr Hopkins, with Ron Baker, is one of two former Barings executives fighting disciplinary proceedings by the SFA.

He said there was a "hidden agenda" because the individual he had in mind for the job was from the banking side of Barings and not the securities operation.

Mr Hopkins said he had discovered persistent breaches of Barings Securities foreign exchange exposure limits, which were exceeded by 100 per cent for most of a year, but he expressed puzzlement that when the Bank of England was told it had taken no action.

Mr Hopkins said when he had first flagged the foreign exchange problem at a meeting at Barings he was "shouted down by everyone in the room saying there's no currency risk."

When he was moved from the

Comment, page 17

## BA tie-up causes rift over EU rules

CHRIS GODSMARK  
Business Correspondent

There were signs of a rift between the British government and the European Commission last night over who should investigate the proposed alliance between British Airways and American Airlines. The President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, said he was altering the law to enable UK authorities to examine the deal under EC competition rules. The DTI said the move, which does not need to be referred to Parliament, would be made by the end of the week.

It threatens to challenge the European Commission's ongoing investigation into the alliance, and other similar tie-ups between European and US carriers, including United Airlines and Lufthansa, and North West and KLM.

But Mr Lang said yesterday: "I have concluded that I have a duty to consider the proposed alliance... I believe this will increase the possibility of reaching an early decision to provide all concerned, including third parties, with the maximum legal certainty."

DTI officials will now conduct an in-house investigation under EC law, which will run in parallel with the existing inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading. The OFT is investigating whether the alliance effectively amounts to a merger despite the lack of any equity stake by either firm. The US Department of Justice is also conducting an investigation under American anti-trust rules.

The tie-up involves British Airways and American Airlines pooling revenues, marketing and ticket sales. It would give the combined group around 60 per cent of flights between Heathrow and the US and raise their share of the market on some routes to 100 per cent. Rivals, including Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic, United Airlines, Delta and Continental are bitterly opposed to the deal.

BA wants combined services to start next April, but has feared the EC probe would cause a substantial delay. The airline had argued that the Commission had no power to examine alliances with other carriers outside the European Union.

A BA spokesman said: "This is a welcome development. It clarifies the legal position over which competition authority on this side of the Atlantic has competency in this matter and gives a clear indication that the review will be conducted speedily."

But experts in EC law doubted whether Mr Lang had the power to overtake the EC's inquiry. "The DTI is trying to get in first and claim the patch from the EC," said Ulrich Bourke, a partner with City solicitors Clifford Chance. "There will now be a jurisdictional battle between the UK government and the EC."

## NAO backs overhaul of regulators

MICHAEL HARRISON

The National Audit Office yesterday gave its effective backing to a root-and-branch review of the way Britain's privatised gas, water, electricity and telecoms industries are regulated.

In a hard-hitting 360-page report the NAO raised questions about the use of price caps to regulate the four industries, whether the individual regulators should be made more accountable, whether they had struck the right balance between shareholder and consumer interests and whether they should be replaced by boards of regulators.

The report from Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General and head of the NAO, comes at a critical time for utility regulation with two of the four watchdogs - Clare Spottiswoode of Ofgas and Don Cruickshank of Ofel locked in disputes with British Gas and BT respectively that could result in both companies being referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee has also just announced a wide-ranging inquiry into the role and performance of the regulators.

Sir John's report points out that Ms Spottiswoode, Mr Cruickshank, the water regulator Ian Byatt and the electricity regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild, are responsible for industries with 25 million customers, assets of £240bn and annual turnover of £51bn representing 8 per cent of Britain's total gross domestic output.

He stresses that while it is not for the NAO to question the

policy objectives of regulation, it is a matter of public interest to illuminate how the regulators have handled their portfolios.

Sir John says there are a number of issues which Parliament "may wish to consider" concerning both the way the regulators work and the way policy is implemented. Echoing a criticism that has been widely levelled at the regulator regime, the report questions whether alternatives to industry specific regulation by single regulators should be looked at asking whether boards of regulators would "be a sensible insurance against the over-concentration of power in one pair of hands" or whether they would dilute effective decision making.

The report also asks whether there is a case for widening appeals procedures against regulatory decisions to include consumers and whether there is not scope for increasing the openness of the four regulators to public scrutiny such as through public hearings in order to develop their accountability and legitimacy.

Sir John also queries whether the regulators are sufficiently effective in communicating their decisions and the reasons for them.

He asks whether there is a case for bringing in staff with specific expertise in individual regulating industries.

Meanwhile, the price formula used in all four industries - whereby bills are capped by RPI less a certain percentage - is questioned. The NAO asks whether it is the best method of putting monopolistic suppliers under 'pressure to improve efficiency.

Profits warning: Makers of classic yuppie accessory in decline weeks after upbeat returns



In a bind: The company blames a drop in orders from WH Smith and a poor showing in the US for its current predicament. Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## Filofax shares slump stuns stock market

NIGEL COPE

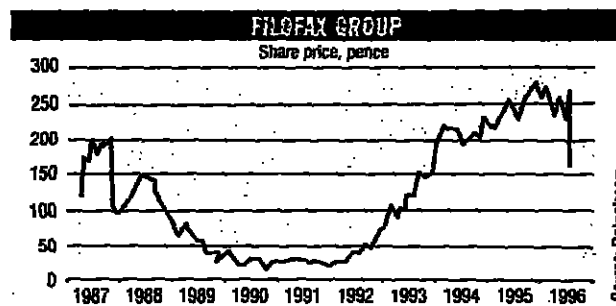
Filofax, the maker of the personal organisers that were once a symbol of the yuppie boom, shocked the stock market yesterday when it issued a calamitous profits warning only weeks after reporting a sharp increase in profits along with an upbeat statement for the current year.

The company blamed the warning on a series of problems including an expected cut in or-

ders from WH Smith, its largest customer. WH Smith, which is undergoing a new restructuring under a new chief executive, is moving to a swifter ordering system that will enable it to reduce its level of stocks.

Other problems are in the US where growth has failed to match expectations even though the company has invested in expensive display systems in stores. Filofax is also experiencing lower demand from some overseas agents such as in Japan.

Filofax now expects to make profits of £2m in the first half, compared to last year's £2.9m. The shortfall is unlikely to be made up in the second half. An-



alysts have slashed their full year forecasts from £8.2m to £5.7m. The tone of the statement and its timing caused consternation in the City and even dismayed its own broker, Hoare

Govett. Andy Bowers of Hoare Govett said: "It does seem quite incredible that this could happen. It seems a coincidence of misfortune over the last couple of weeks."

The timing of the statement is certain to anger shareholders, due to attend the company's annual meeting on Thursday.

Robin Field, Filofax chief executive, said he accepted the group's credibility might take a knock as a result of the warning but added: "Things haven't gone wrong. We are just anticipating that they might. We have learnt over backwards to speak to people as early and as openly as possible and I would hope we might get some credit for that." On the timing of the announcement, he said it was difficult to evaluate events early in the year, typically a slow period for the group.

Comment, page 17

## Glaxo lifted by new Aids drug

TOM STEVENSON  
City Editor

Glaxo's shares jumped 20.5p, or 2 per cent, to 911.5p as the market focused on the potential profits that might flow from the company's dominance of such an important therapeutic area.

Glaxo said yesterday the independent Data and Safety Monitoring Board had recommended that the experiment be abandoned after late stage trials because the panel had found a 54 per cent reduction in the rate of progression in Aids patients compared with the placebo.

It is usual practice to abandon trials of drugs for life-threatening diseases for ethical reasons when it has become clear that their effectiveness

exceeds expectations. A similar trial conducted by SmithKline Beecham was abandoned recently after it became evident that its treatment, Coreg, was unexpectedly effective in treating congestive heart failure.

The end of the trial does not mean automatic approval for the drug. In SmithKline's case the Food and Drug Administration, the US pharmaceuticals watchdog, asked for further research to prove the drug's efficacy.

Glaxo's trial of Epiriv started in March 1995 and was scheduled to last for two years, ending next March. Involving nearly 2,000 patients, the trial combined Epiriv with Retrovir

and put the two together with other drugs in the same class called "reverse transcriptase inhibitors".

The combination of drugs has become an important weapon in the fight against Aids. Results of similar studies were presented to a recent industry conference in Vancouver.

Paul Diggle, an analyst at SG Strauss Turnbull, said: "Expectations for Epiriv have been gradually rising."

He added: "Today's news is reinforcing in people's minds that the Aids market is changing and that Glaxo is in an extremely strong position to be the highest beneficiary of it."

## SmithKline concentrates on organic growth



Jan Leschly: Policy is to promote new product lines

TOM STEVENSON

SmithKline Beecham poured cold water yesterday on speculation that it was poised for a major acquisition following the consolidation in earlier this year of two types of equity into one share class.

The move might have been a prelude to a rights issue funded deal, but Jan Leschly, chief executive, said the company planned to concentrate on organic growth following two large acquisitions in 1994.

He was speaking as the drugs and consumer healthcare group announced better than expected second-quarter profits of £34.2m, up from £30.6m in the

same period last year. The rise in profits was driven, the company said, by sales growth, mainly from new products accounting for almost a third of the pharmaceutical sales. These products, which include Serenat, an anti-depressant drug that saw sales rise 59 per cent, form part of a drive by SmithKline to generate more than a quarter of its sales from products that did not exist five years ago.

New products sales reached £37.6m during the quarter, up 40 per cent at comparable exchange rates. In the first six months these kinds of treatments were worth £702m in sales, a 37 per cent rise on the first half of 1995.

Both sales and trading profits from consumer healthcare products also saw a rise, of 22 per cent. SmithKline increased its exposure to consumer brands with the acquisition two years ago of Sterling Winthrop's consumer operations.

Investment column, page 18.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3708.40	+27.10	+0.7	3857.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4236.90	+5.90	+0.1	4568.80	4015.30
FTSE 350	1860.80	+11.20	+0.6	1945.40	1816.60
FT Small Cap	2104.32	+0.24	+0.0	2244.36	1954.06
FT All Share	1839.43	+10.26	+0.6	1924.17	1791.95
New York	5396.12	+5.18	+0.1	5778.00	5032.94
Tokyo	21163.69	+158.06	+0.8	22066.80	18734.70
Hong Kong	10865.31	+67.02	+0.6	11594.99	10204.87
Frankfurt	2475.07	-7.33	-0.3	2593.49	2253.35

INTEREST RATES					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Bond
UK	5.77	6.00	7.82	8.27	8.03
US	5.29	6.00	6.84	6.43	7.01
Japan	0.47	1.25	3.36	2.86	6.84
Germany	3.28	3.44	6.41	6.79	6.99

CURRENCIES					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Bond
US	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57
DM	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57
Y	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Bond
Oil	19.35	+0.36	15.50	5	4.8
Gold	383.70	-0.85	396.85	130.3	125.2
Gold C	247.40	-0.58	243.64	Base Rates	5.75

### GET A LIFE.

MINI



# Railways will be no Wild West for Stagecoach



COMMENT

The company seems positively to revel in being castigated for behaving in a manner which is "predatory, deplorable and against the public interest", as the MMC concluded last August.

Brian Souter, the executive chairman of Stagecoach, was in characteristically ebullient and aggressive mood yesterday, forecasting that by the end of the decade his bus and rail empire would be four times its present size and turning over a cool £2bn.

Which ever way you look at it that is a lot of off-peak savers and short city hops for Mr Souter and his sister, Ann Glog, who started the business 25 years ago with £25,000 in redundancy pay and just two coaches plying the London-Dundee route.

Why shouldn't they be bullish about the future? After all, Stagecoach has just announced record pre-tax profits of £44m and its share price is riding high, valuing the company at some £720m against its flotation price three years ago of £100m?

Since it began life in 1980 Stagecoach has collected small bus companies at the same rate as it has attracted investigations by the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission but that has not stunted its growth. Indeed the company seems positively to revel in being castigated for behaving in a manner which is "predatory, deplorable and against the public interest" as the MMC concluded last August after investigating its activities in Darlington.

Before executives at those few remaining independent bus operators don their full body armour, Mr Souter would like to point out that the exponential growth he

is forecasting will come not from gobbling up yet more bus companies. Stagecoach has decided that the bus market is getting too expensive and that the fancy price-tags being commanded are no longer justified.

Instead he intends to grow the business through overseas expansion and the acquisition of more passenger rail franchises to add to South West Trains, which Stagecoach took over from BR in February.

It is easy to see why Stagecoach is attracted by rail. The upfront outlay is minimal since track, trains and stations are leased and it would take incompetence on a grand scale not to run the franchises more efficiently and profitably than BR even with smaller subsidies.

Although it is still early days, the evidence thus far is that Stagecoach is making a decent fist of South West Trains. But so it ought to with the biggest commuter rail franchise in Europe and one that probably carries more opinion formers, high ranking civil servants and top bankers into central London than any other railway.

And why do the doubts linger? Well, for a start Stagecoach will need to achieve some spectacular growth in overseas markets which last year accounted for just £50m of turnover but are slated to bring in £700m in four years time.

Second, Stagecoach will need to win a good number of the 10 remaining passenger franchises, all of which which it intends

to bid for. Even then lines such as the South East Trains, for which it is a short-listed bidder, are not of the same quality as South West Trains and suffer from much older rolling stock. The probability is that it will end up having to buy franchises from other operators.

Finally there is the question of regulation and what a future Labour government might do. In the bus industry Stagecoach might be confronted with an Ofbus empowered to cap fares and break up local monopolies while the rail industry is already regulated.

The deregulation of the bus market might have created something akin to the Wild West and Stagecoach may have had fun riding roughshod over the competition but the rail industry will not be quite the same proposition.

Stable doors are slamming hard this week. Today, the Bank of England will put the finishing touches to its new supervisory structure, based on a review by the consultants Arthur Andersen.

So much work has gone into this over the last nine months that we can be sure it will be state of the art stuff. It will certainly need to be far more than a reshuffling of the management pack.

One of the biggest problems the Bank of England has faced is to rebuild the

morale and motivation of the supervision department, and that means as a first priority making the best use of the resources it has got, rather than hiring hundreds of accountants to check returns from banks. The other slam came from the Securities and Futures Authority's, whose enforcement committee yesterday debated a set of new rules designed to catch the bosses rather than just senior managers next time there is a serious scandal.

They could be dubbed the Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey rules, since they have evolved from the SFA's quite natural embarrassment that these two bankers escaped formal censure by the SFA earlier this year over their roles running Barings.

The underlying problem of supervision is that however well the Bank of England and the SFA run their own supervision departments, communication between different regulatory bodies around the world remains the biggest difficulty of all.

As the copper crisis has demonstrated, no matter how many international cooperation agreements the regulators sign, there will always be some serious problems that fall between the cracks.

For a company that specialises in making personal organisers, Filofax is not looking particularly organised at the moment. Yesterday's profits warning was a

stonker by any standards, but coming just five weeks after the company was talking bullishly about a good year and hitting the acquisition trail it looks even worse.

The real issue here is whether the company's problems are just an unfortunate collection of one-offs or symptoms of a deeper malaise which the move away from the yuppie and towards the housewife market has failed to address.

It is true that the expected cut in orders from WH Smith says more about the retailer than it does about Filofax. Smiths is keen to reduce products in some ranges but this is more about de-stocking than not stocking at all. Smiths is moving towards a new ordering system that will enable "just in time" deliveries so it can cut inventories. After this sudden blip, orders should pick up again.

Filofax's problems in America and Japan are of more concern. The US slowdown has not really been explained and the company has invested heavily in expensive display systems in shops. The sudden halt in orders from Japan also seems odd. Filofax chief executive Robin Field insists the problems are short term and that the markets have not gone away. Investors may prefer to remember Filofax's previous collapse in 1989 brought on by high costs, erratic sourcing and a brand that was deemed tired and expensive and wonder whether history is not repeating itself.

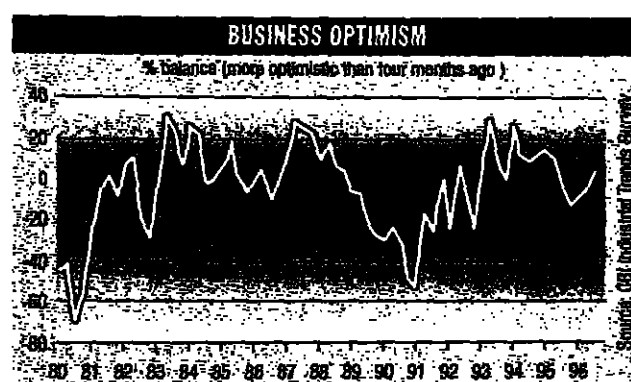
## Manufacturers see start of recovery

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Editor

Manufacturing industry is on the road to recovery, with business confidence increasing for the first time in over a year. Yet manufacturers expect to hold prices steady as their costs fall.

Reporting these upbeat results in its quarterly survey yesterday, the Confederation of British Industry said there was no need for another interest rate cut, and that the pick-up in manufacturing strengthened the case for a cautious Budget.

Andrew Buxton, chairman of the CBI's economic affairs committee, said strong growth in output was not a foregone conclusion. But he said: "The interest rate reductions have, with hindsight, been justified."



They have created a situation where people start to feel a bit better and spend more."

City experts shared this cautious optimism. "The survey tells us that manufacturing has turned the corner. The one weak area of the economy no

longer seems to need any extra stimulus," said Mike Dicks, UK economist at investment bank Lehman Brothers.

The survey, along with a remarkably successful £2bn gilts auction, helped the pound rise nearly a penny to DM2.3108.

Business optimism rose in the four months to July, the first rise since April 1995. The trend in optimism in the CBI survey is one of the best leading indicators of growth in the economy.

A balance of 6 per cent of manufacturers said output rose rather than fell in the four months to July, compared with a zero balance in the April survey. The balance of manufacturers expecting output to increase in the next four months rose from 12 per cent to 22 per cent, the strongest figure recorded in a quarterly survey since October 1988.

Orders have improved, but more slowly than respondents expected. Domestic orders were virtually flat, although there was an increase in the consumer goods sector. Export orders

picked up modestly. As with output, both home and export orders are expected to pick up sharply. But Mr Buxton warned that manufacturers' expectations have been disappointed for the past year.

Activity is picking up, but prices fell in the latest four months for the first time in more than two years. Firms expect domestic prices to remain stable, and export prices to fall at the fastest rate since 1961. They also foresee the fastest fall in their unit costs since 1958 during the next four months.

A less rosy aspect of the survey is the finding that manufacturing employment fell faster over the past four months, with 16 per cent of firms cutting jobs - a similar fall is expected in the next four months. Moreover,

stocks of finished goods increased slightly.

David Hillier, an economist at brokers EZW, said: "If firms are still adjusting job levels and stocks are still high, we are going to get patchy data for the next few months." Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said: "The Chancellor should consider cutting interest rates while manufacturing is in this weak."

However, most City analysts concluded yesterday that the improvements recorded in the CBI survey, which follows up-beat surveys from Purchasing Managers and British Chambers of Commerce, rule out a cut in base rates at the end of this month. Only unexpectedly weak figures for retail sales would excuse ignoring the signs of an up-turn in manufacturing.

## Inquiry ends as BSkyB agrees on pay-TV deal

MATTHEW HORSMAN  
Media Editor

The Office of Fair Trading will this morning confirm it has reached an understanding with BSkyB, the satellite broadcasting giant, ending months of speculation about the regulation of the pay-TV market in the UK.

As a result of the understanding, BSkyB's position in the market will not be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. BSkyB has made what some observers said last night were minor concessions on the way it "bundles" programming, including movies and sport, for distribution to cable operators. The changes will enable cable companies to "re-tier" their basic package of channels, taking fewer Sky services without sacrificing discounts.

John Bridgeman, the director general of the OFT, is believed to have been persuaded that the growth of the cable industry has not been unduly threatened by alleged monopolistic behaviour by the market leader.

But Mr Bridgeman will petition the Restrictive Practices Court to accelerate its case against BSkyB and the Premier League, which have signed an exclusive broadcasting agreement for top football. The OFT wants all statements from the defendants to be delivered by 15 October, rather than a month later, citing public interest issues.

The news emerged as BSkyB yesterday confirmed the appointment of Elisabeth Murdoch, the daughter of 40 per cent owner Rupert Murdoch, to the board. Ms Murdoch, who earlier this year was appointed general manager, broadcasting, will be deputise for her father and two other News Corporation executives when they are unable to attend board meetings.

It is understood that Ms

Murdoch's experience as the manager of two television stations in the US, both of them linked to Mr Murdoch's Fox Network, was the main reason for her appointment.

Ms Murdoch's arrival at BSkyB fuelled speculation that she was being groomed to take over eventually from her father. For the past few months, she has been directly involved in both programme distribution and dish installation operations at BSkyB, and attends key strategy sessions with Sam Chisholm, chief executive, and David Chance, deputy managing director.

Ms Murdoch, who has declined all requests for interviews, reports directly to Mr Chisholm and Mr Chance. She is one of two Murdoch children to hold senior positions at News Corporation companies. Her brother Lachlan heads up the Australian operations of the parent company.

Insiders deny there are any plans to reshuffle the top jobs at BSkyB, despite industry rumours that Mr Chisholm may begin to spend more time in Australia, where News Corp's Foxtel television venture has been having trouble. With the OFT inquiry behind it, BSkyB is expected to concentrate on growing its European business, primarily through a joint venture with Bavarian mogul Leo Kirch, and to complete preparations for the launch of new channels, including some pay-per-view services, in the autumn.

But media analysts warned last night the company could still face regulatory pressures from Brussels, where competition authorities are watching developments in the pay-TV market in the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

Market Report, page 19

## Davies warns over downsizing

ROGER TRAPP

Howard Davies, deputy governor of the Bank of England, yesterday added his voice to the growing criticism of "downsizing".

Mr Davies, a former director general of the Confederation of British Industry, told the Institute of Management's annual companions lunch in London that in following US companies down this road "we may have backed ourselves into a corner".

In particular, there was a "danger of communicating mixed and confusing statements". Every company said its employees were its greatest asset, "but when the chips were down" it readily reduced the size of those resources, he added. That confusion was not likely to create the state of mind that would bring the improved performance being sought.

The problem stemmed from what he believed were several generally accepted but con-

flicting principles. Among these was the realisation that the changing business environment had created a need for different skills and the end of the cradle-to-grave employment contract, and the idea that meeting the obligation to train employees gave most companies a loyal and more productive workforce.

Stephen Roach, the Wall Street economist whose change of mind over downsizing initiated the current debate, had asked whether the resurgence in productivity had put too great a strain on employees and could lead to a labour backlash. That could happen here, he said.

Pointing out that legislative interference in such matters did not generally work, he said companies should be looking to develop their employees to give them "lifelong employability if not employment". Certain companies, such as Unipart, with its internal "university", were moving in this direction.



Howard Davies: Firms should offer lifelong employability

## Salomon leaps ahead with record earnings in first half

DANIELLE ROBINSON  
New York

Salomon Brothers yesterday became the latest Wall Street firm to stun investors with much better than expected earnings, reporting a \$291m (£183m) net profit in the second quarter ending 30 June, from a \$60m loss in the corresponding period.

Added to a \$276m net profit during the first three months of the year, Salomon reaped its most profitable first half in its history, with net profits of \$567m. Its results, far exceeding analysts' expectations, placed it among a long list of top Wall Street firms reporting record first-half net earnings.

Perrin Long, a veteran securities industry analyst, and private consultant to investment firms, said: "The results for most of the companies have been very favourable compared to results ending June 1995."

However, he warned that the first half could be followed by a gloomier final six months of the year. First-half results were boosted by a booming stock

market as more than \$115bn poured into equity mutual funds, and US corporates embarked on a mergers and acquisitions frenzy.

"The primary strength was in equity underwriting, and mergers and acquisitions activity, which made up for a pull-back in fixed income underwriting," said Sally Krawcheck, securities

industry analyst at Sanford C Bernstein in New York.

However, analysts also argue that the stock market correction in the first weeks of July radically changed the equity underwriting picture. "With the stock market so volatile, along with the uncertainty about interest rates, I feel that the [equity] underwriting pipeline has

gone for the moment. We could see significant drops in quarter-on-quarter earnings. If the stock market calms down, we may see strong earnings in the second half," Ms Krawcheck said.

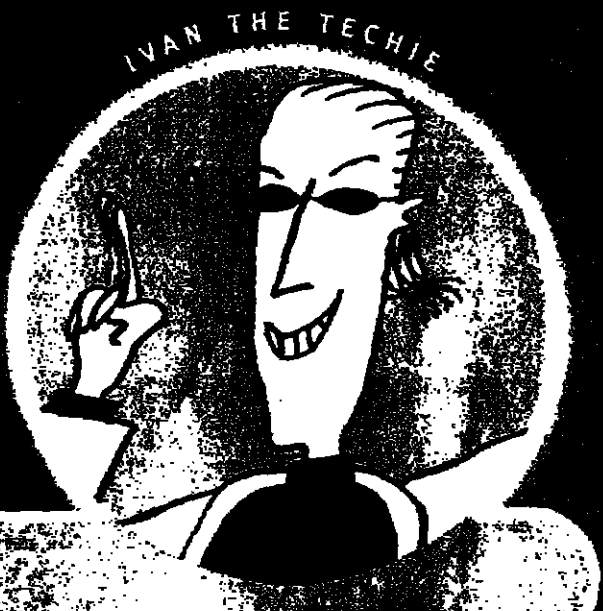
If the market stabilises, Wall Street could see a record full-year, pre-tax earnings level of \$9.5bn in 1996, according to forecasts by Perrin Long.



# "SPEED KILLS ...YOUR COMPETITORS."

"Is your company on

Mercury's network





18  
business

## SmithKline learns new tricks

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

It was hardly surprising that SmithKline Beecham's shares should pause for breath this year. Over the course of 1994 and 1995 they doubled, sending the market value of the drugs manufacturer up to a daunting £20bn. The highly fashion-conscious pharmaceuticals sector was, by the beginning of 1996, very much in again and SB one of its favoured members.

Figures for the first six months of the year were at the top end of expectations with a strong second quarter making up for a less impressive first term. In the three months to June sales rose 17 per cent to £1.92bn while pre-tax profits climbed 14 per cent to £342m and earnings per share of 8.3p were 12 per cent up on the previous year.

That was a creditable performance given the dynamics of the drugs industry, which remain far from ideal. After the fat years of the 1980s, pharmaceutical companies have had to learn new strategies to cope with a trading environment in which price rises in the largest, most mature markets are nigh on impossible to achieve.

Jan Leschly, chief executive, described the pricing environment in Europe yesterday as "pretty traumatic", with pressure on governments' spending plans compounded by arbitrary tax squeezes in some countries. In the US matching inflation is considered a real achievement while the Japanese have learnt to keep a tight lid on health-care costs.

To make money in this giant, but competitive and highly regulated market, companies have been forced to concentrate much more than they ever had to on innovation, on geographical diversification into young markets such as Latin America and Eastern Europe, and on diversity of income streams. SmithKline has performed well in all three areas.

Rather against the trend two years ago, the acquisition of Sterling sent SB deeper into the toothpaste and nicotine-patch consumer end of the market. With profit growing 22 per cent in that division, the deal is looking better and better. Clinical Laboratories and DPS, a US pharmaceutical benefit manager, are less obviously successful sidelines.

The key to SB, however, at more than three-quarters of profits, remains the prescription drugs arm, where new products continue to drive profits growth. Almost a third of sales come from drugs that did not exist five years ago, essential in a business where market share and margins literally explode when patent protection runs out.

So that is all the good news. The bad is that it is all in the price. With full-year forecasts of just over £1.5bn receiving

only minor upgrades yesterday, the shares stand on a prospective p/e ratio of 19. Compared to a forecast growth rate in low double digits that leaves no scope for further growth in the short run.

## An illusion at Euro Disney

In the Magic Kingdom of Euro Disney nothing is ever quite what it seems. And so it is with the debt-laden theme park's latest set of results. At first glance the results look encouraging and appear to show that last year's 20 per cent price cut really is enticing more punters through the gates.

Though net profits in the three months to June fell from last year's £170m (£21.8m) to £147m, the previous year's figure was inflated by £179m of exceptional items. In addition, operating revenue from the park and hotels edged 4.5 per cent higher over the quarter to £1.4bn. All this means that in the nine months the company cut net losses to £22m, compared with £171m

in the same period last year.

But there is more to these figures than meets the eye. Euro Disney's revenue was increased dramatically from last summer when it introduced the new Space Mountain ride. The third-quarter year-on-year comparison is still benefiting from the new ride but that will drop out of the figures soon and some analysts are expecting only a flat performance in the final quarter.

In addition, the company is still benefiting from graduated interest payments and a holiday on management fees and royalty payments until 1999-2000. The company needs to go some if it is to reach break-even by the time it returns to full payments.

The company says it plans new attractions, such as a Planet Hollywood restaurant, a new cinema and a shopping mall, which will attract more visitors. Admissions are on an upward trend with hotel occupancy encouraging, even though no fresh figures have been released.

But Euro Disney is faced with a difficult French economy, with high unemployment and a strong franc, which makes the park expensive for visitors

from countries such as Britain and Italy. According to Nigel Reed of Paribas, the current value of Euro Disney shares might be just £13, even assuming it can increase revenue by 30 per cent over the next four years.

Analysts are forecasting full-year profits of £184m. But with the interest and royalty payments looming the shares - down 7p to 164p - still look unattractive.

## Mitie keeps on growing

Mitie is the growth stock par excellence. Yesterday's 38 per cent jump in pre-tax profits for the year to March from £6.6m to £6.3m was the seventh successive rise of more than 30 per cent, confirming that the cleaning, engineering and painting services company's remarkable growth story remains intact.

After a 33 per cent rise in earnings per share to 16.2p, the dividend was increased by a similar margin, but still remained four-times covered at 4p (3p).

Mitie provides a range of services to property owners, whether in the private sector, such as BT, IBM and British Aerospace, all big clients, or government departments such as the Treasury, which buys engineering maintenance from the company. Engineering accounts for 40 per cent of sales, as does cleaning, with painting chipping in another 20 per cent.

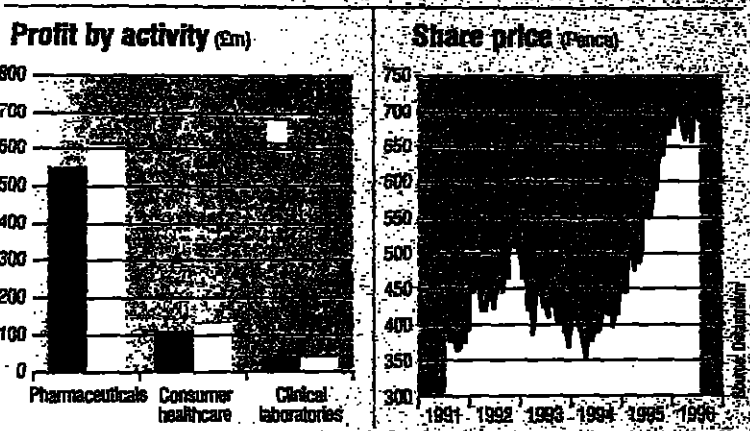
It hardly sounds glamorous work, but the contracts Mitie signs its customers up to are typically long (between one and five years) and so predictable, the company ties up little capital (hence its great return) and is highly cash generative.

Sales, which have grown from about £10m in 1989 to more than £160m last year, are set to continue growing for three main reasons. The market for outsourced services is growing as companies and the public sector concentrate on their core activities. Mitie is gaining critical mass and it has enormous scope to grow market share, to spread into new regions and to add new services.

Mitie's shares have faltered recently, coming back from a peak of 415p last month in line with a jittery market, and possibly reflecting concerns over a minimum wage which, if introduced by an incoming Labour government, could increase costs noticeably. Mainly, however, the market has simply started to jib at paying 18-times prospective earnings, even for a company with such an excellent track record. Fair enough in the short term but this is a good long-term hold.

## SMITHKLINE BEECHAM: AT A GLANCE

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1
Normalised profits (£bn)	1.17	1.29	1.40	1.52	1.63
Earnings per share (pence)	10.7	12.7	14.0	15.2	16.3
Dividends per share (pence)	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0



## Parker Knoll tries a soft option for coach potatoes

## CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK



Calling all couch potatoes: Want a chair with a drinks holder?

Your grandparents may very well have a Parker Knoll recliner - the comfy chair with a footrest that swings upwards when you lean back.

Now, if you have any couch potato tendencies at all, it could be your turn. Parker Knoll's new young, thrashing chief executive, James Moore, 36, has been brought in specifically to re-upholster the family firm.

The most exciting new project on the blocks for the furniture and fabric company is a new reclining chair for TV watchers, with a holder for drinks on one arm and for the video remote on the other. Customers will be able to slump stupefied in front of the box for even longer periods. (I've already got my order in.)

Parker Knoll already has one new product for launch this summer, the "Cab-i-net". Designed for people who work at home, it looks like an ordinary wooden cabinet on the outside, but when you open up the front a desk, shelves and drawers emerge to produce the perfect workstation. A snip at £1,000.

Now, what's on TV tonight?

Achtung! Feuer! A fire on the roof of the Bundesbank building in Frankfurt yesterday caused "some material damage but no casualties", firemen said.

Workmen were using bitumen to re-cover bits of the Bundesbank's roof, and a "technical defect" in the bitumen caused iron sent plumes of black smoke wafting across the Frankfurt skyline.

Forget the Leeds Permanent Building Society, welcome the Leeds & Holbeck. The former is in the process of being subsumed into the Halifax, which itself is converting into a bank. The latter is a tiddler, just under 80 branches against the Leeds Permanent's 450-odd. But now the larger mutuals are converting to plc's, the smaller are feeling heady with importance.

Leeds Junior, as it might be known, has just hired its first publicity officer, Deborah Anderson, to mark the fact that it will soon be in the top 10 societies by size, as against a measly 17th two years ago. It'll be fountains in the head office forecast next.

No doubt neighbouring bankers wondered whether this was some equivalent to Papal white smoke. The financial markets are after all on tenterhooks. The Bundesbank is due to hold a crunch meeting tomorrow to decide whether to lower interest rates or not.

Firemen soon put the fire out, says a spokesman, and Bundesbank president Hans Eismann was not disturbed in his office. In fact no staff were evacuated at all. Not Gottterdammerung quite yet, then.

Anything Deutsche Morgan Grenfell can do, UBS can do too. Poaching people in New York, that is. Barings has just settled a legal spat with Deutsche for luring over 50 emerging markets specialists away. Undeterred, UBS has

hired seven people from Chase Manhattan and JP Morgan to strengthen its emerging markets fixed-income business.

The additions come on the heels of UBS's decision last week to hire Daniel Canel, formerly co-head of emerging markets at Chase Manhattan, as head of its North American and European emerging market debt business. His deputy Gabriel Polizer also came over.

It seems that if you work in emerging markets at the moment you can virtually name your price.

The Swiss gnomes say their move is part of an effort to hire a total of 60 emerging markets officials worldwide, with completion of the activity hopefully within a fortnight.

These include between 40 and 45 in the US and Europe. The firm now has 28 people based in the US and Europe who focus on emerging markets.

UBS snatched four people from JP Morgan and three from Chase Manhattan.

So, in emerging markets? Underpaid? Get your cv into UBS soonest.

## Dockers to continue Mersey campaign

CHRIS GODSMARK  
Business Correspondent

Sacked Liverpool dockers yesterday vowed to continue their campaign of unofficial industrial action against Mersey Docks and Harbour Company after it announced that it had won back a big contract lost during the 10-month long dispute. The news boosted Mersey Dock's shares by more than 10 per cent, with the price rising 36p to 383p.

Mersey Dock's largest customers, pulled out of the docks a month ago, ending its container services to and from America's east coast.

ACL blamed the move on sympathy action by US dockers in the International Longshoremen's Association of America, who blocked a company ship for 24 hours before Christmas.

Mersey Docks declined to put a figure on the value of the contract, but analysts have estimated it at around £4m a year.

The dispute began when Mersey Docks dismissed 329 dockers last September for refusing to cross picket lines. Earlier this year the Transport and General Workers Union negotiated a deal giving former employees redundancy payments of up to £25,000. But the union rejected the deal. When Atlantic Container Line pulled out on 21 June, Mersey Docks withdrew the redundancy offer.

Yesterday Mersey Docks said that its contract with ACL would resume today, a situation regarded by Atlantic's president, Bernhard Ryding, as "sensitive". Ex-employees coordinating the dispute accused Mersey Docks of using the contract to justify cutting 80 jobs.

Bobby Morton, a former shop steward, said, "ACL only left the port temporarily. It's come as no surprise to us they've made this announcement, and we won't change our campaign to get our jobs back." He said ACL

was planning on having two container cargos leave the docks early this morning. "Immediately we find the destination of these ships we will take appropriate action. We've had many messages of support from international unions."

Mersey Docks insisted business had been returning to normal and that the dispute was winding down. A spokesman said productivity had risen by 30 to 40 per cent in the new labour force hired after the sackings.

## 200 jobs cut in Halifax review

Halifax Building Society, which is in the throes of a £10bn stock market flotation, is cutting around 200 jobs from its head offices in its home town and Leeds. Staff affected by the cuts, which are part of a drive for greater efficiency, will be offered redeployment within the group "wherever possible".

"Our intent is to position the Halifax for future growth, in line with our mission to be the biggest and best personal finance business in the UK," chief executive Mike Blackburn said. He added: "This means providing our growing opera-

tions with additional, highly skilled staff, at the same time as creating a more efficient and effective central support function for the group as a whole."

Halifax, which last year merged with Leeds building society, intends to lose a total of 1,200 jobs, but simultaneously create 1,000 posts in its general insurance and direct telephone banking business.

Halifax employs a total of 27,000 people, including 3,500 at the Halifax head office and 1,500 in Leeds. The majority of the job cuts announced yesterday will be in Halifax.

Working practices and administrative processes within both offices have been reviewed "to support and sustain future expansion", a spokesman said. Staff associations were kept informed of the review and staff were told of the changes today.

The Independent Union of Halifax Staff and the Leeds Staff Association, which jointly represent 85 per cent of staff, said they had secured important agreements with the society.

Ged Nichols, IUHS general secretary, said: "The unions fully comprehend the commercial needs of the Halifax but

we have continually asserted that individuals must not be flattened by the march of progress. "We have, therefore, taken every step possible to protect our members' future."

Clive Webster, LSA general secretary, said his union had worked with the IUHS since the merger announcement in November 1994 to ensure members' interests were protected. "We have secured key agreements that there will be no compulsory redundancies, on pay and benefits protection and on retraining and redeployments opportunities," he said.

## IN BRIEF

• Littlewoods' mail order division is to launch a direct sales catalogue called Index Extra. The catalogue is designed to capitalise on the fastest growing sector of the mail order market and diminish the group's dependence on the agency style of business which is in long-term decline. Littlewoods has been testing Index Extra over the past two years, based on its Index chain of high-street catalogue shops.

• Polo Ralph Lauren, the branded clothes group, is to site its UK headquarters in London's New Bond Street, the same site as its largest UK store. The company has signed a lease with property group Chisfield.

• St Modwen Properties increased profits by almost 10 per cent to £4.7m in the six months to May. Chairman Stan Clarke made a confident statement about the prospects for the full year. In the past six months, annual rent roll rose by a third to £13.2m. A number of long-term land agreements are starting to come to fruition, the company said.

• KS Biomedix, the recently floated bio-technology company, says it does not expect to broadcast news on clinical trials of its new arthritis drug until the end of the year. However, the company said phase-two trials concerned with a rheumatoid arthritis treatment were on time and also on budget. The company reported a £218,163 profit in the year to May, compared to a £59,000 profit in the previous year.

• Ryland, the Midlands-based vehicle distributor, saw profits motor ahead 11 per cent to £3.6m in the year to April, boosted by a lower cost base and better marketing. New car volumes increased by 47 per cent including a 14 per cent increase from existing dealerships. Used car sales were 66 per cent higher with continuing operations recording a 36 per cent hike. The volume car and truck markets proved to be more difficult areas.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Southwest Indent (F)	11.9m (12.0m)	2.02m (2.25m)	8.1p (8.5p)	8.5p (8p)
KS Biomedix (F)	0.02m (0.20m)	-0.22m (0.06m)	- (-)	nil (-)
Bridson Estates (F)	- (-)	17.2m (16.3m)	5.57p (5.24p)	3.15p (3.05p)
Lancashire Enterprises (F)	9.85m (8.90m)	1.35m (1.02m)	5.3p (4.9p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Merseydock Abbey (F)	12.6m (12.4m)	0.10m (-2.63m)	0.15p (-9.33p)	nil (nil)
MITE Group (F)	154m (7.4m)	6.30m (4.57m)	16.2p (12.2p)	4p (5p)
Hyland Group (F)	314m (233m)	3.6m (3.2m)	9p (8.05p)	3.72p (2.62p)
Southdown Property (F)	20.1m (19.2m)	-8.83m (2.00m)	-9.5p (1p)	nil (-)
Stagecoach Hodge (F)	501m (338m)	43.6m (32.6m)	20.3p (16p)	6.7p (5.3p)
St Modwen Props (F)	16.4m (13.0m)	4.71m (4.32m)	2.5p (2.5p)	0.8p (0.7p)
Wholesale Filling (F)	97.5m (80.9m)	5.03m (3.51m)	22.88p (16.07p)	12.5p (11.7p)
Winchester Multifamily (F)	3.06m (0.25m)	-1.90m (-0.36m)	-16.7p (-4.5p)	nil (-)

(F) - Final (I) - interim (H) - 13 months (12 months)

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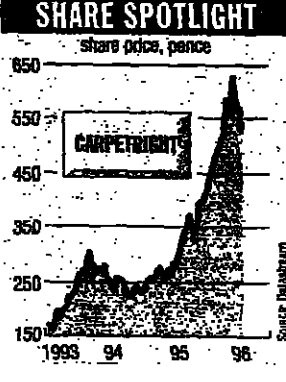
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# Investors pile into carpets after Allied's price cut



MARKET REPORT  
PATRICK TOOHER

Carpets were king yesterday as investors piled into two of the sector's biggest players. The welcome mat was rolled out for Allied Carpets, the leading carpet retailer making its stock market debut, while rival Carpetright, headed by the irrepressible Lord Harris of Peckham, rode high on news that sales in the first 12 weeks of the year were a third up on the same time a year ago.

Last week Allied succumbed to recent stock market turbulence by cutting its flotation price to 215p, at the lower end of the 205p-235p range indicated in the prospectus. Although the intermediaries offer was not fully taken up, such caution proved somewhat excessive as the shares raced to a 19p premium on their first day of trading. A chunky 9.1 million shares changed hands.

At the offer price, Allied stands on a prospective price-earnings multiple of 13 times,

substantially below the high teens rating Carpetright commands. But brokers like Mees Pierson have pencilled in compound growth of at least 40 per cent over the next three years as the store opening programme is rolled out, and reckon the shares could hit 300p by next summer.

Although margins are half those of Carpetright, Allied is seen as pinching market share from the independents, who still control 58 per cent of the carpet trade and target the same middle-to upper income customer as Allied. Moreover, the carpet market itself is set to grow again as the number of housing transactions increases with rising consumer confidence.

But the anticipated switching out of Carpetright into Allied failed to materialise as Lord Harris gave shareholders an upbeat trading assessment at their annual general meeting. He disputed market lead-

ership with Allied by claiming a 14 per cent share and reiterated his aim of opening 25 more stores this year. The shares responded by closing 25p higher at 547p.

A firm start on Wall Street reinforced the Footsie, which ended the session at an intraday high of 3708.4, up 27.1 points. News that Tesco would not be bidding for French retailer Docks de France also helped sentiment. Dealers had feared a rights issue of up to £1.5bn to fund the deal.

Tesco, up 8p at 280p, was the second best performing blue chip of the day behind BSkyB. Shares in the satellite broadcaster hit a record high of

494p, 14p better on the day, as fears of a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission over its links with leading cable television operators receded.

Technology stocks, which have been hit hard by the recent sell-off on both sides of the Atlantic, were back in demand following strong fourth quarter earnings from software giant Microsoft.

Among the second and third liners, Micro Focus advanced 80p to 770p, CML Microsystems rose 5p to 109p, while Egle Multimedia, doing the rounds among institutional investors, rebounded 7p to 76p.

Among the banks, HSBC

put on 25.5p at 1,068p after a profits upgrading from brokers Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs ahead of the interim results in the next two weeks.

BZW's global hunt for buyers of Standard Life's 29 per cent stake in Bank of Scotland ends today with the close of its international book-building exercise. Bids towards the upper end of 220-230p, a share range are understood to have been submitted, a small discount to last night's 230.5p closing price. Pricing and allocation of the shares could be announced later on today.

British Gas extended yesterday's gains, adding a further 5p to 195.5p on positive reaction to the industry regulator Ofgas's decision to delay a pricing decision about its Transco pipeline arm.

British Airways took a hit late in the session as the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang gave UK competition

authorities the go-ahead to investigate the carrier's proposed alliance with American Airlines. BA's shares ended 4.5 lower at 410p after touching 517.5p earlier.

Also in the closing moments of play, Lex Service picked up 1.5p to 35.5p after the Minister for Defence Procurement, James Arbuthnot, announced the group had won a five-year contract to supply, maintain and manage the RAF's fleet of cars, vans and minibuses.

A profits warning from Filofax cut the shares to shreds. They finished 105p down at 165p after the company warned that its UK business would be hit by WH Smith's decision to reduce its stock levels.

Signet, the former Ratners jewellery chain, closed 1.5p higher at 24.5p despite denying reports it had agreed the sale of its UK businesses to venture capitalist Apex partners for about £280m.

Shares in Shield Diagnostics, the Dundee-based medical diagnostics company, rose 13p to 144p after Hamish Hale, the chairman, announced the sale of the deal could be significant. Investors are awaiting the results of independent clinical trials in the US on its blood-clotting testing kit to measure the probability of heart attacks and strokes.

Bridgend, owner of the Stocks country club in Hertfordshire, ended 2p firmer at 23p. Last year it sold the Imperial Hotel in Cork to Hanover International, where Bridgend retains a 48 per cent stake. Shares in Hanover were suspended yesterday pending approval of a £40m deal to buy six hotels to be funded by a placing and open offer. Bridgend is seen benefiting from the deal.

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# The Stagecoaching of Britain

**A two-bus firm now has a £501m turnover, writes Christian Wolmar**

The "Stagecoaching" of Britain is gathering what seems to be unstoppable speed.

Having grown from a two-bus operation in 1980 to a multinational, publicly-quoted concern, Stagecoach now has a turnover of £501m and profits of £43.6m, as revealed in its annual report, published yesterday.

In the past year the company has added a string of bus companies to its holdings, and has won the prize rail franchise of South West Trains, the largest on the network, with a turnover of £260m - most of which is not included in last year's accounts, as the company did not take over until February.

All this growth has taken place in an industry which is so unfashionable that it seldom finds a mention in this or any

other newspaper. Buses are for the poor, the young and the infirm, those who cannot afford to use a car and normally receive little commercial interest.

Buses may not be trendy, but they are attractive for companies wishing to grow quickly. Apart from the buses themselves, little investment is re-

quired, and almost all the revenue is in the form of cash.

Until the industry was deregulated a decade ago, most bus services were run by local coun-

cils with timetables that had been unchanged for years, and buses were subsidised from the rates. Deregulation changed all that. Anyone with an old

banger could register to run a bus service, and there was fierce competition on the popular routes. Inevitably, some smaller companies grew quickly.

Cross-subsidising little-used services with the profits from the most popular ones was no longer possible. Only loss-making routes continued to be subsidised by local councils and these were tendered out, with private companies often winning the contracts.

In the ensuing bus wars, Stagecoach came out the winner. It used strong tactics, often running buses just in front of those of the existing company to ensure that it mopped up the passengers. There have been 20 references to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, and four enquiries.

The reports have been highly critical. In Lancaster, for example, the acquisition of the local transport company was found by the MMC to be "against the public interest".

On two occasions the firm has been forced to sell 20 per cent stakes in adjacent bus companies. In Strathclyde, Stagecoach was told it could not merge with another local firm; in several other places it was criticised for tactics against local operators.

The height of Stagecoach's aggression was in Darlington, a town which has now become more famous for its railway history.

In the summer of 1994, Stagecoach lost out in its attempt to buy the local municipally owned Darlington Transport Company (DTC) to a rival, Yorkshire Transit.

Stagecoach did not take its defeat lying down. Instead, its local subsidiary, Busways, recruited many of DTC's drivers

by offering them a £1,000 bonus and a guarantee of three years' work, and began running free buses, claiming it could not charge because it took a month to obtain a licence.

DTC went bust under this pressure after just three days, and the council's bus firm became valueless.

Yet, despite the widespread criticism of Stagecoach, there is general acceptance, even amongst its opponents, that the firm tries to run good services. It has recently bought nearly 1,000 new buses, a scale of acquisition unheard of in the industry since deregulation. Brian Soutter, the chairman, boasted yesterday that the average age of the fleet had been reduced from 9.1 years to 8.7, and that as the new buses came on stream over the next year, the figure would go down to 8.1. Ironically, for such an aggressive private company, Stagecoach argues consistently that local monopolies are the best way of operating services. Added to this, the Tory ethos has been to create competition, and this has caused much of the conflict between Stagecoach and the regulatory regime.

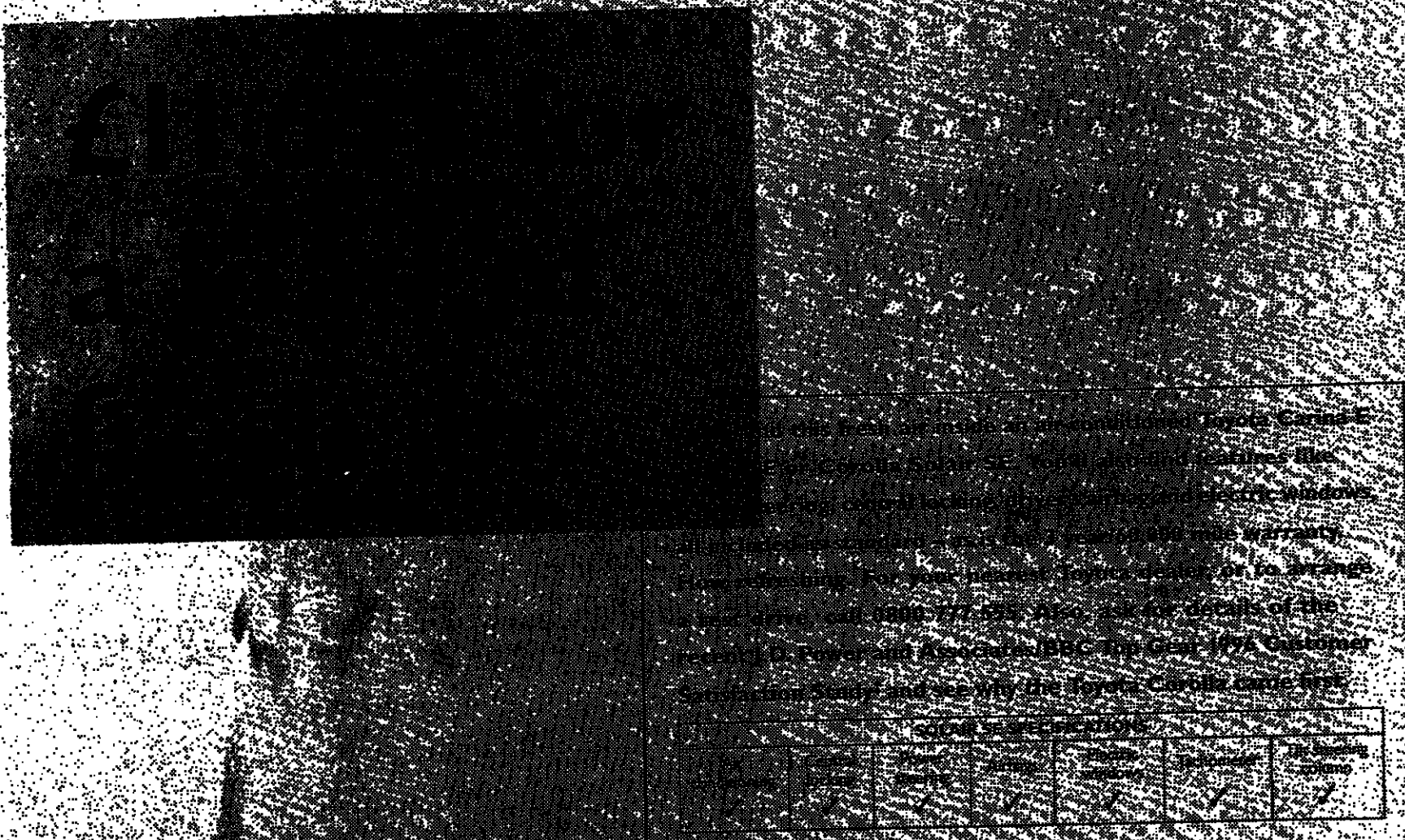
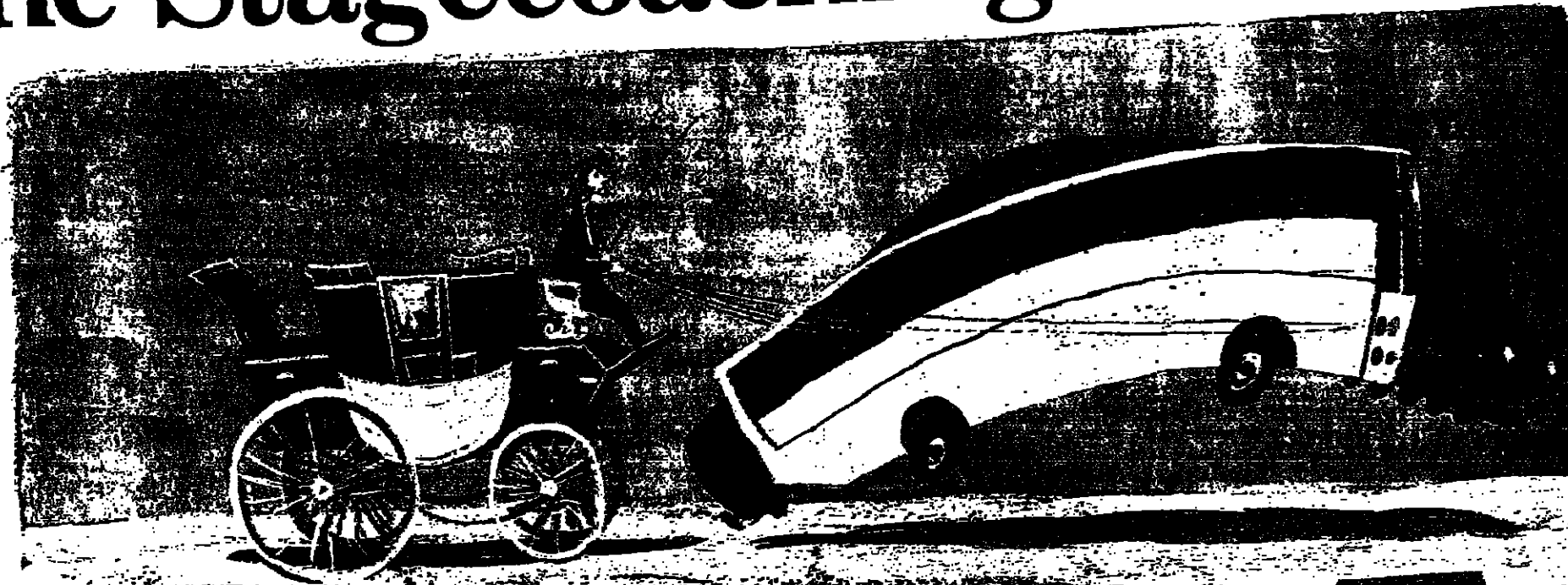
The bus industry will inevitably see more acquisitions and mergers: its economics dictate that bigger companies are more cost effective. They can use their muscle to buy buses at up to 20 per cent compared with their smaller competitors, and can save even more on spares and equipment.

They can also make profits on property acquisitions by moving bus stations and depots out of town. And Stagecoach is famously lean, with few levels of managers. It is the white-collar workers who tend to be shown the door when the company makes an acquisition - rather than the drivers, who are made to work longer hours but usually keep their jobs.

With fewer bus companies remaining on the market, Mr Soutter said yesterday that Stagecoach, which has already bid for most rail franchises, will try for all 12 remaining companies not yet on the market. It is already short-listed for the Cardiff Railway franchise.

The economic pressure towards bus mergers and the rail bids therefore means that Mr Soutter may well achieve his aim of running a £2bn company by the end of the decade. But this is a tall order: the company will need to quadruple in size between 1995 and 2000.

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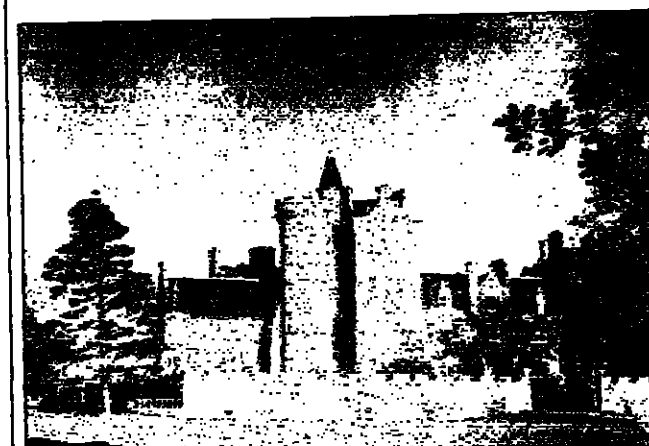


THE CAR IN FRONT IS A TOYOTA



The air-conditioned Corolla and Carina E Solair SE £11,655 & £12,999\*

\*PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY AND INCLUDE VAT BUT EXCLUDE NUMBER PLATES, ROAD FUND LICENCE AND A DELIVERY CHARGE OF £445 INC VAT (THIS EXCLUDES N. IRELAND). MODELS ILLUSTRATED COROLLA SOLAIR SE 1.3 3DR (WHEEL TRIMS ILLUSTRATED MAY VARY FROM FINAL SPECIFICATION) AND CARINA E SOLAIR SE 1.6 5DR. SEE DEALER FOR DETAILS OF OUR 3 YEAR/60,000 MILE WARRANTY. \*STUDY BASED ON A TOTAL OF 14,176 UK CAR CONSUMER RESPONSES.



Highland gain: Ann Gloag's castle home near Inverness

## Ruthless driver of deals who began on buses

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

Brian Soutter, the chairman, is the public face of Stagecoach while his sister, Ann Gloag, the managing director, tends to hide herself away in Beaufort Castle, near Inverness, which she bought last year.

Mr Soutter speaks with a strong Scottish accent and has a penchant for red blazers which make him look like a *maitre d'* in a Beefeater restaurant. But behind the unfashionable attire and the slightly uncomfortable public manner, there is a sharp financial brain.

Mr Soutter is the son of a bus conductor and actually worked as one himself, but he always set himself higher goals. His bus work was only to pay his way through a chartered accountancy course at Strathclyde University and he soon joined accountants Arthur Andersen.

Mr Soutter and Ms Gloag, who were brought up in a council house in Perth, used their father's £25,000 redundancy cash to set up their own business in 1980, starting with two second-hand coaches running between London and Dundee.

The subsequent growth of the company has been motivated by Mr Soutter's hard work ethic and he has clearly been uncompromising in the pursuit of his business objectives. You don't go from nothing to over £500m in 15 years without a tinge of ruthlessness but this has been

tempered by his strong Christian beliefs.

He is an evangelical Christian who neither smokes nor drinks. While his workforce are expected to do long hours, the company does recognise unions and one trade unionist said that Mr Soutter "was someone we can do business with".

Ms Gloag, 12 years Mr Soutter's senior and now aged 53, had an inglorious academic career, failing to get any O levels and becoming a nurse after leaving school. Unable to cope on a nursing sister's income, she and her brother started renting out caravans and minibuses as a part-time supplement to her income.

Given the paucity of successful businesswomen, it is hardly surprising that she was voted Businesswoman of the Year in 1990. Through her efforts, Stagecoach runs the main bus service in Malawi, has acquired a company in Kenya, runs services in Wellington, New Zealand, and has set up an office in Hong Kong.

Described as "friendly and unflashy" in one profile, she does not like publicity and recently complained to a television company which hired a helicopter to overfly the castle. Unfortunately for Ms Gloag, with Stagecoach rarely out of the public eye and businesswomen still so rare, she may find it increasingly difficult to steer clear of the spotlight.

24/7/96